

An Inquiry
INTO
RELIGION,
AND
The USE of
REASON
In Reference to it.

By a Lay-Hand.

MAT. vii. 7.
Seek and ye shall find.

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THE
PREFACE.

THO Endeavours to Promote *Religion* and *Piety* ought to be Received and Interpreted with the same *Candour* and *Charity* They are Design'd, and consequently need no Apology in General, yet because it may happen (in Treating on any Subject) that some Particular *Circumstances* or *Expressions* might give *Offence*, I thought it necessary, to Obviate such Objections as I could foresee, by such *Excuses*, as I hope will be *Satisfactory*, because They are *Just*.

And first, I must assure *The Reverend Clergy* (for whose *Persons* I have great *Respect*, and for whose

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Sacred Function I have high esteem)
that I have not put my *Sickle* into
Their Harvest out of any disrespect
to *Them*; I readily own their *Di-*
vine Mission and *Commission*, and I
acknowledge, that *They* have a *Par-*
ticular *Call* and *Authority* to *Preach*
the *Gospel*, and to *feed the Flock of*
God: But I conceive, that this does
not hinder, but that all *Believers*
ought to *Promote Christianity*, and
as *they Receive the Gift* may *Minister*
the *same* to *one another*: Nay, it is
the *Duty* of every *Christian* to *seek*
that *He* may *excel* to the *Edifying* of
the *Church*, and *when he is Converted*
to *strengthen his Brethren*, And I am
induc'd to endeavour it at this
Time, and in this manner, because I
conceiv'd, That the *Plain* and *short*
Account I give of my *Inquiry into*
Religion, may have greater *Influence*
on the *World*, than if it came from
an *Ecclesiastical Person*: 1st. Because

1 Cor. 9. 16.

1 Pet. 5. 2.

1 Pet. 4. 10.

1 Cor. 14. 12.

Luk. 22. 32.

it

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it will be more suitable to the Capacity of the *Layty*, than the great *Learning* of the *Clergy* could easily have condescended unto: 2ly. Because the Performances of the *Clergy* (how excellent soever) would be depreciated by the *Disaffected*, as *Partial*, and be too much Neglected by *Others*, as the Suggestions of *Advocates in their own Cause*.

In the next place, I must Apply to All those who differ from *The Church of England*, and Assure Them, That this Treatise is written in the Spirit of *Charity*, And if any of Them Think, that I have Searched Their Wounds too deep, They ought Nevertheless to excuse it, because it is *kindly* intended for Their *Service*, and to make the *Cure* the more *Compleat*.

Lastly, I must Address my self to All Sorts of Readers, desiring Them, that if my Style (aiming at brevity) should seem to them too *Positive* and

Dog-

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Dogmatical, They would nevertheless Interpret it *Modestly*, and take my meaning to be, only to express my own Sentiments plainly, which I am so far from even *Recommending* to others, farther than They shall be found to be *Right*, that I will readily Retract as many of Them my self, as I shall at any Time be Convinc'd to be *wrong*, for my Design is only to discover *Truth*, and to Embrace it wherever I find it, from whose hands soever it may happen to Come.

And so without farther Apology, I expose these Papers to the World, with this *view* and expectation, That if They are *Right* They may do some Good, and if mistaken, They may be soon Amended by The *Charitable Remarks* of Others, who I hope will rather endeavour, to shew Themselves good *Christians* than good *Criticks*, Since even a *Heathen* could advise

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advise them, rather to Countenance
what is well done, than to Carp at
small or few mistakes.

—*Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar Maculis*, Hor. lib. 2. Epist. 3.

The Scheme of the whole Book is
hereunto annexed, whereof this *first*
part contains only Nine Chapters,
and as I succeed in this, I intend (God
willing) to proceed in the Rest.

The

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advise them rather to Conscience
what is well done than to Care
small or great mistakes.

—The Author is in earnest, and has
written this, for the use of the
Office, which, for the use of the

The Editor of the Book is
extremely anxious, and of this
part contains only a few
and not that in the
willing) to proceed in the

The Editor is in earnest, and has
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Office, which, for the use of the

The Scheme

Of the whole B O O K.

THE Scheme I propose is, First, To Consider the End we All Aim at; and therefore my first Chapter is of Happiness. 2dly, The Art of Attaining it, which is Wisdom. 3dly, The Author of it, which is God. 4thly, The means of obtaining this Happiness from God, which is by Religion. And my 2d, 3d, and 4th Chapters are denominated accordingly. 5thly. I consider who must choose my Religion for Me; and I find, that 'tis absurd and impossible that any Body should do it but my Self, so that my fifth Chapter is of the Judge of Controversy. I then Inquire, with what faculty Men should Judge, and my sixth Chapter is of Reason. And then I look for a Rule to Judge by; and my seventh Chapter is of The Rule of Faith, which I find is not Tradition, nor the Church, but The Scriptures, And my 8th, 9th, and 10th, Chapters are Employ'd under those Titles. And this Rule of Faith directs me to Christianity, as profess'd in the Church of England by Law

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Established, so that my 11th, Chapter is of The Christian Religion, which requires Faith as Necessary to Salvation; and therefore my 12th Chapter is of Faith, and my 13th of the Creed or Necessary Articles to be Believed, the chief of which is the Messiah; and my 14th Chapter is of H I M. And, because no Body can be a Christian without Baptism, nor a Good one without frequently Receiving the Communion, my 15th Chapter treats of the Sacraments; and since Faith and the Sacraments cannot avail Persons of Age, who do not Obey the Christian Doctrine, my 16th Chapter treats of Obedience which consists in Love, viz. Of God, and of our Neighbour. and since all this is in order to Everlasting Bliss, my 17th, Chapter is of A future State, which not being attainable to Salvation, but upon earnest Petition, my 18th, Chapter is of Prayer. And that I may not be discouraged in pursuit of Eternal Happiness; by any seeming difficulties in Revealed Religion I endeavour to find out, how far we are concern'd in Mystery; and my 19th Chapter is on that subject. And, my last Chapter concludes, That it is the Interest and Duty, of all Governments, and of all Men, to promote the Belief and Practice of Christianity.

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C H A P. I.

OF *HAPPINESS*.

§ 1. **B**EING Dispos'd (by the Grace of God) to make a diligent Inquiry into RELIGION, the better to Enable me *to make my calling and Election sure*, I found my self Oblig'd by Reason, Method, and the Old Celebrated Maxim (*Sapiens Incipit a Fine*) to Begin with the *End*: And therefore since *Happiness* is the *End* of Religion, and the Aim and Design of all Men in their right Senses, I will in the first place make *Happiness* the Subject of my Inquiry.

§ 2. Happiness in General seems to consist in *the enjoyment of our Desires*, but since Desires vary according to the Temper of Men, *Happiness* will be liable to *Their* various Descriptions, some will take it for *Compleat Pleasure* or *entire Satisfaction*, Others will Place it in, *The constant Enjoyment of Reasonable Desires*, but Christians ought

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to express it in the words of the Holy Psalmist, and expect it, in *the fullness of Joy and Pleasures for ever more.*

§ 3. But whichsoever way it be taken, it is plain, that *Perfect Happiness* cannot be attain'd in this World, not only because of the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, but also, because our *Minds* are apprehensive of *Good* and *Evil* beyond it, and because there is always something wanting here to *Compleat* our Satisfaction : So that if *Alexander* had the *whole World*, he would impatiently covet *another* ; and if *Diogenes* in his Tub pretends to be better contented, yet *He* also is in pursuit of something he *wants* ; the accomplishment whereof would add to his *Felicity*.

§ 4. But, 'Tis not only *Want* and *Defect*, which renders our *Happiness* in this World *Imperfect*, but there are Innumerable *Dangers*, and Real pungent *Grievances* which often *Afflict* us, and frequently *Interrupt*, and many times *Overballance* all our Sensual Enjoyments, and render *Compleat Happiness* in this World impossible.

§ 5. But if we take *Happiness* for the degrees of *Felicity*, we shall find, That as no Body has it *All*, so every Body has *some* : Our Inquiry therefore must respect the *Comparative Degree*, and what it is, that renders our *Happiness* *more* or *less*.

§ 6. And

§ 6. And so the Philosophers seem to mean by their Debates, *Wherein Happiness did consist*; for there can be no doubt, but that *Superlative Happiness* does not consist in *this* or *that*, but in the Confluence of *all* Satisfaction: So that Their Intention was to find out, what did *most* conduce to make Men *Happy*, or to Increase or Establish the Felicity they enjoy'd.

§ 7. And to determine that matter aright, it seems necessary to distinguish between *Corporal* and *Spiritual* Pleasure, the former consists in the *Gratification of Sense*, and the other in *Congruity to Reason*; Corporal Pleasure (and Pain) is Common to all *Animals*, to *Beasts* as well as to *Men*, with this difference, That in *Brutes* it can only affect the *Present Time*, but in Rational Creatures, It may relate both to the *Past* and the *Future*, for it may be *Increas'd* or *Diminish'd*, and in a manner, *Anticipated* and *Repeated*, by *Fancy*, *Fear*, *Hope*, and *Remembrance*.

§ 8. Now it seems, that *Spiritual* Pleasure exceeds *Corporal* Pleasure, as much as *Souls* excel *Bodies*, or *Men* excel *Beasts*, for as the *Body* is more *Gross*, *Heavy*, and *Dull*, so its Pleasure, or Pain is more *Blunt* and *Insipid*, but the *Mind* being *Pure* and *Spiritual*, and of more exquisite Sensation, is capable of Pleasure more *Refin'd*, and in a

manner *Divine*, and subject to Pain more Intense, and to a *Worm that never dies*; in short every Man's Experience may convince Him, that there is no comparison between the Pleasure or Pain of the *Body*, and of the *Soul*, for a wounded *Body* may be easily endur'd, but a *wounded Spirit who can bear*.

§ 9. Secondly, We should distinguish between *Pleasure* and *Happiness*; for all Animals are capable of the former, but nothing but *Rational Beings* are capable of the latter, for it chiefly consists in *Thought*, and especially in the *Thought of doing well*, the Pleasure whereof whoever feels, despises all other Pleasures in comparison of it, Whence we may conclude, that as there can be no *Pleasure* without *Sense*, so there can be no *Happiness* without *Reason*, neither can a *Rational Creature* be *Happy* in Pleasures that are *Unreasonable*; for His *Felicity* must necessarily arise from enjoyments *congruous to His Reason*, from which he cannot deviate with Impunity, for *Reason* is a Sovereign Monarch, that will be obeyed or punish the Transgressor, It will always Reproach, and even Torment those who Rebel against it, so that it is Impossible for a Thinking Man acting unreasonably to have Tranquility in his *Mind*, and without that, He can never be Happy.

§ 10. Hence

§ 10. Hence we may justly Infer, That Men should be Denominated *Happy* from the State and Condition of their *Mind*. And accordingly we find by the Examples of Martyrs and those who suffer for Righteousness sake, that their *Mind* being steady and serene, They little regarded bodily Pleasure or Pain, but despis'd the malice of Their Persecutors even to Death : and were chearful and Happy in the midst of their *Torments* : Whilst the *Wicked* whose *Spirits* are *Grieved*, and whose Consciences reproach them, can by no Bodily Gratification be kept in Temper, but sometimes they *Murder* Themselves, sometimes grow *Mad*, and are always discontented and Uneasy.

§ 11. But although *Happiness* does chiefly consist in Inward Satisfaction, and such a state of Mind as renders the Person not only easy, but also highly Contented, Yet since the *Mind* is cloathed with the *Body*, which may both Influence it, and be Influenced by it, those Philosophers did not Judge amiss, who placed *Happiness* in the Perfections of Body and Mind, *Mens sana in corpore sano*. And if it be rightly understood a Christian need not vary from that Opinion.

§ 12. For tho' the *Body* is naturally inclined (and the more for being *sound*) to some

Animal Actions and Passions which in some Circumstances are by Divine Prohibition become Criminal ; and it cannot be denyed, That tho' all Stomachs are not equally *craving*, nor all Appetites equally *furious*, nor all desires fix'd upon the same Thing, yet all Men have an Inclination to *Evil* in some kind and degree or other : So that *Humane Nature* is Infected with what Divines call *Original Sin*, and if the *Mind* did not govern the *Body*, and Subdue its Passions, and Regulate its Actions, This natural Concupiscence and Inclination to Sin would probably render every Man in the world *Vicious* and *Wicked*, and consequently *Unhappy*.

§ 13. Yet what has been said do's not hinder, but that every Good and Wise Man may desire a *sound Body*, as well to avoid the Pain and Affliction of Infirmities and Diseases, as the better to enjoy the lawful Pleasures that are allow'd him, but chiefly to enable him the better to perform all those Religious and Civil Duties which are enjoyn'd him, since God who has commanded Them, has supplied him with a *Rational Soul*, and proper Faculties to direct and assist him in the performance of them.

§ 14. As to a *Sound Mind*, It seems to Import, 1st. An *Understanding* that conceives and judges things aright. 2dly. A faithful *Memory* that treasures up the Determinations

terminations of the Understanding for our Use and Conduct. And, 3dly. A Conformable *Will* to put them in practice, and howmuchsoever any Man is deficient in either of these, so much he wants of true *Happiness*, and so far he is from having a *sound Mind*.

§ 15. And, whereinfoever the *Mind* is unsound or defective as aforesaid. There are certain natural Consequences and Misfortunes that attend it, As, 1st. If the *Judgment* be weak, it will be *erronious*, The Person will delight in Vain and Foolish things. He will suffer the *Body* to Domineer over the *Mind*, and drag it to the Vices it is most strongly Inclined to, not perceiving the Inconveniencies that may follow. And, 2dly. If the *Memory* fails, the Person so far loses the use of his *Reason*, and becomes a Fool. And, 3dly. If the *Will* be corrupted and Rebels against the *Understanding*, That Man must needs live Irrationally, being abandon'd to all manner of Wickedness and Folly that he is Inclined to, so that he will often have occasion to say with *Medea* in the Poet,

*Video meliora Proboq;
Deteriora Sequor.*

§ 16. Now in the first Case, the Man may think himself *happy* tho' he is not so, for at best his Satisfaction can be but Childish, Silly, and Irrational. In the second Case, he cannot think at all, or not to any purpose, because for want of *Memory*, there can be no Coherence in his Thoughts: But in the last Case, the Man can in no Sense be styled *Happy*, because the Pain of his *Mind*, from the dread he has of the Consequence, will very much exceed the Pleasures of his *Body*, if he be a Person of good Understanding.

§ 17. For as has been said, *Happiness* must be derived from the Sentiments of the *Soul*, so that no Man can be *happy* who has not perfect *Tranquility* in his *Mind*, and no Man can have that, whose *Will* Rebels habitually against his Judgment, for he will be at *variance* with *God* and with *Himself*, he will alway be in *fear*, which is generally the most predominant Passion of Mankind: So that *Conscience* of Evil done, and *Fear* of Evil to be suffered, will be Insuperable Obstacles of his *Tranquility*. *Guilt* will be always uneasy, and a Galled Soul can never find Rest but by *Repentance*, for whatsoever other way it may take, *hæret lateri lethalis Arundo*, *Shame* and *Fear* will still attend it. And if any pretend to be less fearful than others in particular Instances,

ees, it is, because They have not the same Sense and Apprehension of the *Danger* as as Others have, or they have some other consideration, founded upon the Fear of some other Danger which they think greater or nearer that over-ballances it, 'Tis then the Office of the Understanding to weigh the *Danger* and the *Punishment*, against the *Pleasure* and the *Reward* of the contrary Action; for surely no wise Man did ever choose to pursue a *Pleasure* less than the *Danger* he risqu'd for it, nor to venture a *Punishment* greater than the *Reward* he expected upon Success, if they were equally Contingent.

§ 18. But it is not Reality but *Opinion* that Governs these Matters; for tho' *Fear* is so natural that every Man in the World abhors *Danger* and *Punishment*, so that he who has *no fear*, has certainly *no Wit*, yet it may often happen, that The *Will* corrupted by the Transports of *Passion*, may Vitiate and Corrupt the *Judgment* also, and render it so weak and erronious, that it may not perceive the *fault* nor the *danger*, and then no wonder if the Sinner be Bold and Stout. But when the Transports are over, or when in spight of all the Powers of *Passion*, *Conscience* like the *Sun* breaks through the *Cloud*, and touches the Person with a sense of his *Guilt* and his

his *Danger*, how uneasy and unhappy is he then, and how plainly do's the difference then appear between the *Courage of Piety* and the *Cowardice of Sin*.

§ 19. It follows, that it is downright Stupidity to pretend to *Happiness*, when ones *Honour* or *Salvation* are in manifest danger, and I appeal to any Man of Honour, If he had privately or in a passion done a *Base* thing, whether he could have any rest in his *Mind*, or any valuable degree of *Felicity*, until he had set the Matter right, and and repair'd it as well as he could?

§ 20. And the uneasiness is greater in case of *Religion*, for no Man who believes in God; or has such apprehensions of a *Future State* as he cannot entirely shake off, can have any Tolerable degree of *Happiness* in an habitual Course of *Sin*, for He will find such Allays and Interruptions in all his wicked Sensualities, by the Dread and Terror of future *Punishments*, and the Stings of an unquiet *Conscience*, His *Mind* will be so Tortur'd with the dismal Apprehensions and Terrible Fears of *Divine Vengeance*, That he cannot Enjoy the *present Time*, or or have any pretence to *Felicity*: For thus, O God, Thou hast ordain'd it, (says St. *Augustine*) and the Order Thou hast Establish'd is Executed, That every Mind which is Irregular, and leaves the Bounds of its Subjection, should
be

its own Tormentor and Punishment.

§ 21. Besides it is plain, and every Man may find it in himself, That tho' the *Body* inclines one to pleasures that are *Brutish*, yet there is some thing Noble and *Divine* in our *Souls* that despises and abhors those *solid Lusts*, Something that Loaths the Baseness and Turpitude of *Sin*, and chides us for stifling our *Reason*, and indulging Passions so unworthy: In short, There is something in every wise Man that is vexed at the filthy conversation of the *Wicked*.

2 Pet. 2. 7.

§ 22. And what is that, but the *Image of God*, in Man, which naturally aims at Perfection, and an Union with God, which cannot be compass'd whilst the *Body* drags the *Soul* to criminal Gratifications? but He will come nearest to it, who restores *Reason* to its proper Authority, and suffers the *Soul* to govern the *Body*, and the *Rationale* to direct the *Animal*.

§ 23. Let it be consider'd, that tho' Men differ in their Judgment of *Good* and *Evil*, yet there is no Man so entirely wicked, but he abhors some Sin or other. He that Oppresses the Poor, yet will not *Steal*, and He that commits *Adultery*, will not *Bear false Witness* against his Neighbour, and the reason why he does not abhor all sorts of Sin, is his *Partiality*; The *Mind* can't act freely, *Reason* is stiff'd by the *Darling Passion*, and whilst

whilst the Exorbitance continues, the Man perceives nothing, but what Humors and Indulges the *Vice* he is inclin'd to. But when the *Passion* is over, and the Mind free, then *Conscience* (which is *Reason reflecting*) makes a lively Representation of the *Sin*, and renders the Person, according to the degree of his *Understanding*, more or less wretched and *Unhappy*.

§ 24. Besides, even as to this Life, the Consequences, of *Sin*, are always Pernicious, and commonly *Fatal*, either to Life, Health, Estate, or Reputation, so that no Man of Wisdom, who foresees these Consequences, can be *Happy* under the dread of them, or by continuance in Wickedness, will run the manifest hazard of being made miserable by them.

§ 25. And it may be farther consider'd, That wicked Men having *no sure Anchor of Hope*, will be toss'd to and fro with every puff of *Adversity*, and will be very miserable even in small Misfortunes, nay *Prosperity* it self will not sit easy upon them, for it cannot afford them the Proper and True *Satisfaction*, which the Soul delights in; and consequently will be so far from rendring them *Happy*, that it will not keep 'em from being *Discontented*, and therefore we often see Persons who are highly favoured with the outward Blessings of Riches and Honour,
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not only Malecontent, Uneasy, and Melancholly, but to a deplorable Degree, Miserable and *Unhappy*, which proceeds from the want of that unspeakable Comfort, which the sense of *Virtue*, and the *Hope* of *Glory*, afford to the Righteous, or from indelible Notions of Immortality, and the dread of a *future Judgment*, from which they are not able *entirely* to disentangle themselves, since they cannot be sure of the contrary.

§ 26. Upon the whole matter, we are convinc'd by *Reason* and Experience, that the *Mind* is the chief Seat of *Happiness* in all Rational Creatures; so that no Enjoyment can be relish'd, if the Spirit be *Griev'd*, nor any Pain be unsupportable if the *Mind* be fix'd and resolv'd; and that the *Spirit* must needs be *Griev'd*, whilst the Conscience is perpetually accusing one of an unrepented Habit of *Sin*, and that the *Mind* can never be calm and serene but when *Virtue* and Religion preserve it in an *even and equal temper*, so as not to be overmuch Elevated or Dejected with the Accidents of *this Life*. And why shou'd it, since its chief Hope and Dependence is on the *next*.

§ 27. Since therefore, The greatest worldly Blessings, as Wealth, Beauty, Honour, and Power, can in no wise make us *Happy*, or the *Mind* of a wise Man *Easy*, without a
Good

Good Conscience : And since Vice, Debauchery and Intemperance will soon *Destroy* those very Blessings we value, what hinders, why every Body shou'd not conclude, *That the only Method to Happiness is, by the practice of Religion and Virtue?*

§ 28. 'Tis certain that the *Soul* being Heaven-born, has, an innate Tendency to its Original, and naturally inclines to please *God*, and to attain *Happiness* thereby, and *Reason* and *Conscience* are forward to act their parts therein: so that the only Objection that can be made by Christians must be, That by Religion (which imports self-denial) we sacrifice the *present* for the *future*, but 'tis not so, for *Religion* is so far from hindring any Honest and reasonable *Pleasure*, that it augments and enlarges it: *Religion* do's not oblige us to cease to be *Men* and become *Angels*, for that is impossible; nor do's it require us to deny our Selves any Pleasure or Satisfaction that is not *evil* in Circumstance, Kind or Degree; on the contrary, It encourages us to enjoy the Blessings of this Life, as coming from *God*, and to do otherwise favours more of *Superstition* than *Temperance*, but Religion do's indeed require, that we shou'd be *Meek and Lowly if we intend to find Rest to our Souls*; And it is our Interest so to be, as far as the Gospel injoyns it; for it is not hereby intended,

Eccle. 2. 22.

Mat. 11. 29.

tended, to *Confound* the Orders and *Degrees* of Men, but to introduce a Habit of *Patience* and *Humility* to be exercised upon just Occasions. Religion do's not *destroy* our Appetites; nor our Passions, but only *Corrects* Them, and *Governs* Them, as becomes Men of *Piety* and *Virtue*. It permits us the lawful Enjoyment of the Creatures made for our Use, and it is our *Interest* as well as *Religion* which confines us to *Habitual Modesty* and *Temperance*, so as neither to Impair our Health or Estate, Sully our Reputation, or Offend our God, *whose Commandments are not grievous*, And who has enjoyn'd us such Duties as would be our true Interest to Practice, even if there were no Account to be made in the World to come.

1 Joh. 5. 37

§ 29. Thus easy it is to be *Happy* here, and *more Happy* hereafter: And the true Reason why every Body is not so is, because some are *Slaves to their Lusts*, and smother their *Consciences*, and act like *Beasts* who have no Understanding; for suppose that *Pleasure* were lessen'd by *Moderation*, (which I deny) yet the question wou'd be no more than this; *Whether it were better to enjoy moderate and lawful Pleasure, with the hopes of Glory, and a moral Assurance of Everlasting Bliss, or to take the liberty of Beasts for a very*
short

short time, with a certainty of Eternal Damnation, or even with the hazard of it.

§ 30. Since therefore it is evident, *That no Man's Soul can dwell at Ease but his that feareth the Lord*; And that this World cannot give us *perfect happiness*, nor indeed any tolerable degree of it, without *Religion*, by reason of the Uncertainty of Life, and the vicissitude of Humane Affairs, and of the *anguish of Mind* incident to Us, amidst our greatest Enjoyments, and of the Perils, Troubles, Torments, Diseases and Death we are continually expos'd to, And since the *highest Degree* of Felicity attainable cannot be *complete* unless it were *Everlasting*; and there is no way of rendring it *perpetual* but by the practice of *Religion*, which is the only Method of obtaining Everlasting Life; and since it is only *in the presence of God* that there is *fulness of Joy*, and at his Right Hand that there are pleasures for ever-more. May we not justly conclude, That they are unwise who neglect so great *Salvation*, and sacrifice the true Happiness of this World and the next, to the vain Prospects, or short Enjoyments, of empty *Ambition*, sordid *Covetousness*, or other more Beastly and Ungodly Vices.

§ 31. In short, since God is the Author and Fountain of *Happiness*, and enjoys Infinite Felicity himself, it must needs be, that

that the greatest *Happiness* Men or Angels are capable of, must consist in the enjoyment of *Him*, and that *They* will approach nearest to perfect *Happiness*, who Love *God* most, and most nearly conform to the *Divine Nature*, and surely there can be no *True Happiness* without *Him*, for *Peace* is his Gift, and 'tis great misery to be alienated from *God*, and 'tis the Sense of that misery, which compels the Wicked to smother their *Consciences*, and stifle their *Reason*, and to deny *Reveal'd Religion* and *God*, whom *They* cannot think of, but as *Their Enemy*, and consequently not without Horror and Amazement.

§ 32. So that upon the whole matter We may conclude, That if *Happiness* do's chiefly consist in *The Tranquility of the Mind*, then certainly, *They* are most happy, who, through a well grounded Confidence towards *God*,
1 Joh. 3. 21.
 have least to Fear, and most to Hope for, and such are *They*, and *They* only, who abound in the *Love of God*, and conform to the dictates of *True Religion* and *Wisdom*.

C H A P. II.

Of W I S D O M.

§1. **W**isdom is the Art of Attaining Happiness; and therefore True Wisdom proposes Perfect and Compleat Happiness, viz. Eternal Bliss, in the Beatifical Vision of GOD, as our chief Aim and End, and the Practice of Religion as the proper and sure Means to Obtain it.

§ 2. To Compass this Glorious End, It is a Principal Rule of Wisdom to Know ones self, (*Nosce Te ipsum*) in order to the better Government of Ones Passions, and by the Contemplation of Their Infirmities to Render Men more Humble and Modest, less Audacious and Conceited, and more capable to supply Their own Wants, and more Industrious to Correct Their Vices, and Communicate Their Virtues: But since The Heart of Man is deceitful, Great care should be taken, That the General Judgment a Man makes of Himself be not derived from Transient Thoughts, or Single Acts, but from the constant Practice, and Habitual Course of his Life.

§ 3. But there is another sort of Conduct which falsely pretends to The glorious Character

racter of *Wisdom*, but is really not so, at
 most it is but *Worldly Wisdom*, for it regards
 only this Life, and the Animal and worst
 part of the Man, and places his Happiness
 in Sensuality, It consists in *Vicious Craft*, and
wicked Cunning, prompted by Criminal Pas-
 sions to attain their Satisfaction, which is
 the *End* it proposes : And because Men do
 very often pursue the proper Methods ex-
 actly, to compass their Ungodly Designs ;
 It is therefore said, That *The Children of this* Luke 18. 8.
World are in their Generation wiser than the
Children of Light ; That is, They have more
worldly Wisdom, They are more *Active*, and
 more *Crafty* ; but in reality They are not
truly Wise at all, but on the contrary, *Their*
worldly Wisdom is foolishness to GOD, who Cor. 2. 14.
takes them in their own Craftiness : So that
professing Themselves to be (Worldly) Wise,
They become (Spiritually) Fools, and are with- Rom. 1. 22.
out Excuse.

§ 4. For *true Wisdom* Considers, That our
 Souls partake of the Nature of *Angels*, as
 our Bodies do of the Nature of *Beasts* ; and
 consequently, That those who prefer the
 Gratification of their *Senses* before their *Rea-*
son, or their *Bodies* before their *Souls* do act
 like *Beasts*, whilst those who chiefly regard
 the *Soul* behave themselves like *Angels*, and
 act with *right Wisdom*, as well knowing,
 That it will not profit a Man to gain the whole
 World, and lose his Soul ?

§ 5. It follows, That it is the *highest Wisdom*, to Love and fear GOD, and as it were, To Live in perpetual *Friendship* with Him. It is not to be express'd what Comfort and Satisfaction arises thence, to a Pious, Well-dispos'd and Devout *Christian*; and how much a firm Affiance in *God Almighty*, and an assured *Hope of Glory*, do's lessen and alleviate all the Miseries and Misfortunes Men are liable to, in Poverty and Sicknefs, by the Malice of *Enemies*, and the Ingratitude of *Friends*, in the Torments of *Diseases*, and the Agonies of *Death*.

§ 6. Besides, The *Christian Religion* is the Noblest and most Compleat Scheme of Virtue that ever was thought on, It do's not only Regulate a Mans *Words* and *Actions*, but Purifies his *Thoughts* also: So that by the Rules of Philosophy, it were *Wisdom* to practice it.

§ 7. For the Question is not, (as our Lufts and Passions suggest) Whether it be better to Enjoy *present Pleasure* that is *certain* tho' *sinful*, than expect future Happiness which They *do not think Certain*, or at best is very *Remote*? For the wicked Pleasure which seems present, affects only the Animal part, and is but of very short Continuance, and really do's not deserve the name of *Pleasure* at all; because it is either accompanied or followed with the *stings of Conscience*, and the

the *fear* of Distempers, Poverty, Shame, and other great Calamities which are Consequential to it, even in this World, And when the *Passion* ceases, the *Pleasure* is gone, and the Person is left *Comfortless*, and Abandon'd without remedy or alleviation, to all manner of Afflictions in *Body* and *Mind*, and finally Expos'd to *Despair*, *Sickness*, *Death* and *Hell*; whilst on the other hand, They who subdue their *Passions*, and live a Life of *Virtue*, and *Abstain from fleshly Lusts*, which war against the *Soul*; tho' they may at first meet with some difficulty in the *Conflict*, yet they will find great Satisfaction and Pleasure in the *Conquest*, They will preserve their *Honour*, their *Estate*, their *Health*, and whatever else is dear to *Virtuous Men*, They will have *Comfort* in all Afflictions that can happen; and if *Faith* be added to their *Virtue*, They will Enjoy *Heaven* upon Earth, and *Heaven hereafter*. 1 Pet. 2. 11.

§ 8. It is in this respect, and in comparison, with *The Yoke of Bondage* under the Law, Gal. 5. 1. which neither the *Jews* nor their *Forefathers* were able to bear. That the Holy Scriptures assure Us, That our Saviour's *Yoke is Easy* Mat. 11. 30. and his *Burden Light*: Not but that *Religion* engages Us in a continual *Warfare* with the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil*, but then it wonderfully helps Us to a *Victory*

over them All, which it is our true Interest (even as to this Life) to struggle for and Obtain. And if there be not a *Demonstrative certainty* of a *future State*, yet there is such a *moral Certainty* of it, as is sufficient to support the *Hopes* of the Righteous, and to frighten the Wicked out of their *Repose*.

§ 9. But I need not labour this Point ; for the difference between *worldly Wisdom* and *true Wisdom* is elegantly set forth by the
 Jam. 3. 15. Apostle St. James in few Words, when he describes the former to be *Earthly, Sensual, Devilish*, and productive of *Envy, Strife, Confusion* and every *Evil work* ; and the other to be, *first Pure, then Peaceable, gentle and easy to be Intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy* ; by which Character, every unprejudic'd Person may easily perceive, whether he has *true Wisdom* or not : And which of these two kinds of *Wisdom* is most likely to promote his *Tranquility* here, and his *Everlasting Happiness* hereafter.
 Ver. 16.
 Ver. 17.

§ 10. But if this do's not Convince him, He may see the *Wisdom* of the Righteous Illustrated, by casting his Eye on the Reverse of the *Medal*, and by considering the Foolishness of Wicked and Atheistical Men ; whereof we have an ample Account in the Book of *Wisdom*, which tells us, That the
 Un-

Ungodly reason'd with themselves, but not aright; Wisdom, 2. 1.
That they were Mortal as Beasts, That their *Verf. 2, 3.*
Name should be forgotten, and their Spirit va-
nish as soft Air: So that we see, That the
best of their Hope was to Die like Dogs,
and have their Memory Perish. And there-
fore they were for making use of the pre-
sent Time: But how? Very Beastly and ve-
ry Maliciously. Let us rise up (say they) to
Voluptuousness and Oppression. Let our strength *Chap. 2, 9,*
be the Law of Justice. Let us lye in wait for *10.*
the Righteous, who esteem us Counterfeits, and *Verf. 11, 12.*
abstain from our Ways as from Filthiness. Let *Verf. 16.*
Us Examine Them with Despitfulness and Tor- *Verf. 19.]*
ture, and Condemn them to a shameful Death.
This is a very Brutish and a very Cruel
Pattern; and therefore not fit for a Christian
or a Man of Honour to follow. Surely
every Man of Sense will be ashamed of
such a Character: But this is not the
worst. Let us proceed to the Event, and
we shall see what all this comes to;
for They were deceiv'd in their Imagination, *Wisdom, 1. 3*
their froward Thoughts separated them from
G O D, and Wisdom would not enter into their
malicious hearts, They were punish'd according *Verf. 4.*
to their own Imaginations, They were Miserable, *Chap. 3. 10.*
Their Hopes were vain, Their Labours unfruit- *Verf. 11.*
ful, and their works unprofitable, Their Wives *Verf. 12.*
were foolish, and their Children wicked, Their
Off-spring was cursed, And thro' Envy of the *Verf. 13.*
Devil

Chap. 2. 24. Devil, they who held of his side, found the Death
 which he brought into the World. And thus
 horrible was the End of the Unrighteous Gene-
 Chap. 3. 19. ration, who were tormented with their own Abo-
 Chap. 12. 23. mination; and felt a Judgment worthy of
 Vers. 26. G O D.

§ 11. Since therefore there is no Peace to the
 Wicked, who are like the troubled Sea, when
 Isa. 57. 20, it cannot rest; whose waters cast up Mire and
 21. Dirt. And since they are Odious to G O D
 Psal. 11. 5. and to All Good Men; And when they
 Prov. 15. 8. are destroyed from the Earth, their Me-
 memory stinks, and Their Posterity suffers.
 And since on the other hand Religion sup-
 ports and promotes Virtue, and Lessens our
 Afflictions, by Composing our Minds, and
 Nourishing them with the comfortable
 Hope of Everlasting Life: We may safely
 Conclude, That no Man is truly Wise, or
 can possibly be Happy, but He that is Reli-
 gious.

§ 12. And indeed, The Holy Scriptures give
 such a full Attestation to this Truth, that
 Matth. 11. in many places of Scripture Wisdom is ta-
 19, ken for Religion, and the Words may be
 2 Tim. 3. promiscuously us'd; So teach us to number
 15. our Days (says the holy Psalmist,) that we
 Psal. 90. 12. may apply our Hearts to Religion. The fear of
 the Lord is the Instruction of Religion, says
 Prov. 15. 33. Solomon, who most elegantly shews the
 Prov. 3. 17. Wisdom of practising Religion; because her
 ways

*ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her
Paths are Peace.*

§ 13. If this be so, Then surely, he is a Fool Psalm 53. 1.
who saith in his Heart, that there is no God:
And it seems that he is no less so, who ac-
knowleging the Deity, nevertheless neglects
to seek after true Wisdom, by which only
he can Acquire Happiness; or become ac-
ceptable to G O D.

C H A P,

C H A P. III.

Of G O D.

§ 1. **I**T is with an *aweful Heart*, and a *trembling Hand*, That I presume to treat of G O D; for I am convinc'd, (with *St. Augustine*) that in regard of his *Excellence*, It is a dangerous thing to speak, even true Things of the *Almighty*, since our best Thoughts and Expressions come so very much short of His Glorious Nature and Infinite Perfections, That it is very difficult to Think, Write, or speak of G O D as we ought. However, It is sometimes necessary to do it, as well as we can. And I take my self to be Engag'd now, to say something upon this *Glorious Theme*, (with most profound Humility and Reverence) since my Subject necessarily leads me thereunto.

§ 2. For, As *Happiness* is not to be attain'd but by *Wisdom*, so neither is *Wisdom* to be Obtained, but from G O D; for there is no *true Wisdom* but what is from *Above*; And Jam. 3. 17. it is from G O D, (in whom we Live and Move Acts 17. 28. and have our Being) that both *Wisdom* and *Happiness* are derived; and the only means of acquiring them, is by *Religion*, whereof

G O D

God is both the *Author*, and the *Object*. It is therefore necessary in the first place, in order to receive those great Benefits from G O D, to *believe that he is, and that he is a* Heb. 11. 6. *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

§ 3. To perceive *that there is a God*, one need only to consider *who made the first Man*. Nothing can make it self; nor can there be an Infinite progress in natural causes: But there was a First M A N, who did not make himself, but was Made by an *Almighty* Power; and that *Almighty* is G O D.

§ 4. And as *Finite* and *Corruptible* Things could not Create Themselves, so neither could they be *Eternal*; and if so, there must be some Prime and *Eternal* Cause of all Things, and of all Perfections, and that is G O D.

§ 5. The Consent of almost all Nations and all Men in the World to Worship a Deity seems originally to proceed from Revelation, which Necessarily Supposes and Infers A G O D, and is approv'd by the General Suffrages of All Ages from the Creation to this day, *Nulla Gens tam Barbara*, says *Cicero*, *cui non Insideat hac Persuasio Deum esse*, and surely, He must be very Conceited and perverse, who affects the *Singularity* of dissenting from all these.

§ 6. Who-

§ 7. Whoever Denies GOD, believes something more Incredible, viz. *That Matter and Motion are Eternal*; and that the wonderful and wise Effects of Providence and Omnipotence, and particularly the Motions of the Planets (which are as Regular as a Clock) have happ'ned by *chance*, and that this glorious System of the World, is the fortuitous product of jumbled Atomes: Now let any Unprejudic'd Person of common Sense resolve, whether it be more reasonable to Acquiesce in these *Absurdities*, or rather to believe the Hol

Pfal. 19. 1. Psalmist, that *the Heavens declare the Glory of God*: And the Apostle, that *the Invisible Things of Him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead*. And to conclude with the Wise Man: *Surely vain are all Men by Nature who are Ignorant of God, and could not out of the good things that are seen know him that is.*

Pfal. 19. 1.

Rom. 1. 20.

Wisd. 13. 12

§ 8. And indeed we must own, that Men carry about them such Demonstrative Evidences of GOD, in the wonderful Frame and contexture of their *Bodies*, and in the more stupendious Faculties of their *Minds*, that there are few or none so hardy, as to deny the existence of GOD, but those whose *Judgments* are corrupted by their Sensualities and bribed by their Vices, to disown a Pow-

which they have grievously *Offended*, and despair to *Atone*; and even *They* rather speak what they *wish*, then what they *think*.

§ 9. It is no Objection against the *existence* of God, that his *Essence* is Incomprehensible to us, whose weak Capacities cannot reach the sublime Glory of *Divine Nature*, any more than it is an Objection against *our own Being*, that other *Animals* cannot comprehend the Nature of *Men*. 'Tis plain that no Creature can perfectly understand any Nature *superior* to, or *more excellent* than its own: Why then should we expect perfectly to comprehend the *Supreme and most Excellent Being of all*. But as this do's not hinder us from believing, That *there are Angels and Spirits*, tho' we do not perfectly understand their Nature; muchless shou'd it hinder us from believing. That *there is a God*, since his Power is more *manifest*, tho' his Nature be more *Mysterious*.

§ 10. But it is needless to Labour this Point to Christians, with whom *The being and belief of God* is the first Principle, so that tis not to Them, but to *Atheists and Heathens*, that one need make use of Philosophical Arguments, to prove in their own way, That *there is An Eternal and Omnipotent God*.

§ 11. It

§ 11. It is manifest, both from *Scripture* and *Reason*, that there can be but *One God*, for a second *Divine Essence* must be either *Inferior* and *Subordinate*; and then it can't be *G O D*, or *Equal*; and then he might Oppose or hinder the *other Omnipotent*, which is *Impossible*, at least there would be more *Omnipotents*, more *Infnites*, and more *Eternals* than *One*, which is *Absurd*. And therefore we must so Interpret the *Fathers*, when they Write of *God the Father*, as the *Principal G O D*, and the *Fountain* of the *Deity*, as not to mean, that either of the three was *more God* than the other, or all of Them more than *One and the same G O D*; and so we should understand the word *Equal* in the *Athanasian Creed* to import *the very same*, for so they mean, in reference to the *Godhead*, tho' they vary their Expressions, in Representing the *Personalities*, and *Appearances*, properties and *Relations*, of the *Three Persons* in the *Trinity* to give Us a clearer *Idea* of the *Matter*; and to shew, That the *Son* is *Inferior* to the *Father*, as touching his *Manhood*; but in respect of his *Godhead*, He is not only *equal*, but *the very same*: And if we consider, that *Polytheisme* or the *Worship* of more *Gods* than *One*, was the *Sin* from which the *Heathens* were to be *Converted*. And that therefore the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity* could
never

never have Converted Them, if the *Three* Persons had not been *One* and the same God ; for They might as well have *three thousand* Gods as *Three* : We may be Convinc'd that the Meaning, and indeed the Expression of the Scripture is, that *Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one God.*

§ 12. And it is not Inconsistent with this *Essential Unity* of GOD, that it should be Communicated to the *Trinity*, and that the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* should be distinguish'd by Incommunicable Properties, and distinct Modes of Subsistence : So that *neither* of Them is the *Other* ; and yet each of Them is GOD.

§ 13. But since this Doctrine of *Trinity* and *Unity* (*Three Persons and one God*) is a fundamental Article of the *Christian Faith*, necessary to be believed by all Men, and yet so Great and Incomprehensible a Mystery, That it is neither *to be fathomed by Reason, nor demonstrated by Example.* It will highly concern us to enquire, What Grounds there are for believing it ; and how far we are concerned explicitly to Understand and believe it.

§ 14. As to the former, It being a matter purely of *Divine Revelation*, there can be no other proof of it but from the *Word of God* : so that it is from the *Holy Scriptures* alone

alone that we must expect the Discovery and Attestation of this Truth.

§ 15. And indeed We need not seek any farther, for The Scripture is very full and expresse in the Point, Teaching us, That Spiritual Gifts, Administrations, and Operations, do Proceed from the *Trinity*, viz. The same *Spirit*, The same *Lord*, and The same *God*, which is *that One and the self same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as He will*, And accordingly the same Apostle gives the blessing to the Church of Corinth in the Name of The Holy Trinity, viz. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and The Communion of The Holy Ghost be with you all Amen, And Suitably hereunto St. John Asserts, *That there are Three which bear Record in Heaven, The Father The Word and the Spirit, and these Three are One* and it is so plain, by the coherence of the following verse, that this Text does belong to this Chapter (as the most Antient and Authentique Copies do Testify) and that the *Word* Signifies *Christ*, as *Joh. 1. 1.* that the Opposition given to this proof is slight and Contentious.

§ 16. Besides this, We read, *Matth. 3. 16, 17.* That Christ at his own Baptism in Jordan saw the *Spirit* of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon Him, and loe a Voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my beloved*

1 Cor. 12.

3, 4, 5.

Verf. 11.

2 Cor. 13.

14.

1 Joh. 5. 7.

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oved Son, &c. So that here are *personal* and distinct Actions attributed to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; The *Father speaking* from Heaven, the *Son spoken to*, and *ascending* from the River, and the *Holy Ghost descending* upon him.

§ 17. And in *Mat. 28. 19.* we find this distinction of *Persons* in the *Trinity*, not only *Incalculated* unto us, but also made *Essential* in the form of Baptism for ever; so that *Baptism* is not *Authentick*, unless it be made *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* And since *Baptism* is the seal of the *Covenant* between God and us, it is manifest that the *Name* in which we are baptized, must needs signify that God with whom we *Covenant*; and therefore it is probable, that it is said, *Name*, and not *Names*; to signify, That tho' they are *Three Persons*, yet they are but *one God*.

§ 18. Hence it is, that the *Orthodox Church* has always believed, that *Christians* ought to worship *One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity*; neither *confounding the persons* nor *dividing the Substance*; and it cannot be denied, but that the *Church*, has good reason to believe this; if the thing in it self be *believable*.

§ 19. And it seems to me, that every thing is *believable*, that one does not *know* to be *false*; for tho' it be never so highly *Improbable*,
D

bable, yet if it be *possible*, it may be *true* and whatsoever *may be true* is *believable*; and a Wise Man has no more to do, but *Im*partially to weigh the *Proof* or the *Testimony* against the *Improbability*, and to determine which he thinks most weighty, and his Assent will follow accordingly.

§ 20. Now in the Doctrine of the Trinity no Man can say, that there is any thing *Impossible*, nor indeed *Improbable*, without Affirming perfectly to understand *the Nature of God*, which no Man do's. And it seems high Presumption, to pretend to Judge any thing concerning God, but by comparing it to his Revealed Attributes. Hence it is that we know God can't *Lie*, because he tells *Truth* it self; and that he is not *Cruel*, because his *Mercy* is Infinite; and from hence we may conclude, That God has not said the thing, (suppose *Transubstantiation*) where we know the thing to be False: But if it appears that God has said a Thing, then I am sure it is *true* in the Sense intended and if it is impossible in one Sense, we ought to Interpret it in such a Sense, where in we may believe it to be True.

§ 21. And indeed, It seems to Me, That the Objections against the Doctrine of the Trinity are Sophistical and Groundless, and altogether unworthy of Those great Pretenders to Reason, who assert greater contradictions

traditions and absurdities in the *Created God of the Arians*, and the *Deputy God of The Socinians*, then They can pretend to Object against the Orthodox, for if we have any Notion of the Divine Nature at all; GOD is an eternal Omnipotent and Supreme Being, which neither a Creature, nor a Deputy can possibly be.

§ 22. As for their Objection, That 'tis impossible, That Three should be One, what is it but to assume a liberty of Judging the Things of GOD after the Manner of Men, and measuring an Infinite Nature by a finite line, besides, they are deceiv'd, for Three may be One in several Respects, And 'tis impossible to give any Human instance that can reach Divine Mysteries, yet perhaps The Adversaries would abate of their Pride, and become more modest, if they would consider.

§ 23. That if Three Judges had a Commission of Assize to them, or any, or either of them, and the first Judge went alone, he would be the Court, and if the second Judge went alone, He would be the very same Court, and the like of the Third Judge, and if they all went together, They would be The very same Court, as They were singly and separately, so that One may truly say, That the first Judge is the Court, the second Judge is the Court, and the Third

Judge is the Court, and yet there are not *Three* Courts, but *One* Court, and tho' each of them is the Court, and all of them are the Court, yet the *first* Judge is not the *second* Judge, nor he the *third*, each of them is *alius*, but, as to the Court, not *aliud*, because the Jurisdiction is *Individual and Entire*, and is the very same to each and all of them, and placed in them, not by *Division*, but by an *equal Communication* of Authority.

§ 24. If it be replied, That tho' *Three* Men may have the same Authority, being matter *ad extra*, yet they cannot have the same *Individual* Nature, Will, or Understanding, but even in the instance aforesaid *One* Judge may alter what the other has done, Wont this naturally lead them to consider, the great disparity between *Divine* and *Human* Nature, and that tho' in *Humanity*, which is *Specifick*, and distributed amongst *Individuals*, and its finite Nature Terminates in one Subistence, and every Person has a distinct *Mind* and a Numerical essence, it must needs be, That the Multiplication of *Persons* must Add to the *Number* of Men, yet it will not follow that in *Divinity*, the number of *Persons* should Multiply the Number of Gods, because the substance and essence of *God* is *Individual*, and numerically the very same, so that it is *Indivisible*, and cannot be Multiplied,

plied, and is applied to the Three Persons, not by *Division*, but by *Communication*, so that *The very same Mind and Will is in them all*, and sure it is a weak Inference, that because *Human Nature* is not capable of this *Perfection*, therefore to deny it to the *Infinite and Omnipotent Nature of God*.

§ 25. So that it seems to me no more difficult to believe the *Trinity*, than to believe, that there is a difference between *Divine Nature* and *Human Nature*, between *Infinite* and *Finite*, between the *Creator* and the *Creature*, and that what is proper to the former, may nevertheless be Impossible to the latter, so that no' finite *Human Nature* cannot be in *Three Persons* without *Division*, yet the *Divine Indivisible Nature* may be in *Three Persons* by *Communication*, without any *Division* at all.

§ 26. Nor do's it at all shake my Faith, that *Human Capacity* is too feeble and Infirm, to comprehend perfectly *the Nature of God*, or to discern the Extent of his *Power*, or the manner of *Divine Operations*, or *Propositions*: On the contrary, My Faith is confirmed hereby; for since I do not *understand* it, I cannot *oppose* it, and since I cannot *know* the contrary, I ought to *believe* (as I do) the Testimony of Scripture concerning it.

§ 27. And here it is, and in cases of this sort, where the *Nature or Power of God* is in question, that *Reason* (or *Human Understanding*) must vail to *Faith*, because in

truth, *Reason* or Human Capacity cannot soar so high, nor reach to understand the Matter aright, and consequently cannot make a right Judgment of it; and it is therefore called an Incomprehensible *Mystery*, because the Wit of Man is not able either to discover or perfectly comprehend the *Secret*: So that in these Cases and the like, (as the *Hypostatical Union*, the Conception of a *Virgin*, the manner of the *Resurrection*, the Union of our own Bodies and Souls, &c.) *Reason* is concerned only to examine the *Testimony*, and if that be found *Divine* or sufficient, *Faith* (by the Grace of God) will follow of course, and the *Mind* submits, because it can Travel no farther, nor make any farther Opposition; for if it should judge of *Divine Nature* or Power, by its Imperfect Notions of *finite Things*, 'tis certain it would *Err*; and therefore it acts wisely in withdrawing, and giving out, when it perceives that it is not a *competent Judge* of the matter; so that in believing *Mysteries*, one does not believe any thing his *Reason* tells him is false; but he believes upon good *Testimony*, what his *Reason* knows nothing of at all, and therefore cannot say, it is either *Improbable* or *Untrue*: And if it be so, that Men do not perfectly understand the *Divine Nature*, and that they cannot give a *Negative* to any thing of it, farther than they do understand

it ; The most they can say against the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is, *That it is above their Capacity*, and that they cannot conceive *how it can be*, but since Men have oftentimes Reason to *believe*, what They have not Power to *conceive*, as *Eternity*, *Infinity*, and the like, that ought not to hinder them from hearing the Proof, *That it is*, nor of believing, *That it is so*, when they find it sufficiently proved.

§ 28. Perhaps some of them can as little understand, *how the dumb water and without* ^{2 Ed. 6. 48.} *Life brought forth living Things*, or how a small grain should produce a great Tree, or how a Fish could live in the Water, which would drown any other Animal, why, or how the Earth moves, or the Sea ebbs and flows, and yet their Ignorance in the *Philosophy* of these matters, does not hinder them from receiving proof of the Thing, nor of being convinc'd, *That it is so*, when they esteem the *Testimony* sufficient to prove it.

§ 29. And surely as has been said, The *Holy Scriptures* (whose Divine Authority shall be proved Chap. 10th) do sufficiently testify the *Trinity* and *Unity* propos'd, The former in the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, who are distinguished in Scripture by *Personal* Actions, Relations, and Properties, and the latter in the *Identity* of *Divine Essence* which is the same in them all, and there-

fore all Actions and Operations of the *Trinity* (except those which are *Intrinsic* and of *mutual Relation*) are the Joynt and Undivided Works of them all, so that neither of them had more or less to do than the other, in the Works of (a) Creation, * Redemption, and † Sanctification, Tho' they are severally ascrib'd to the Respective *Persons* by way of *Appropriation*, to distinguish Their Operations and Offices towards Us, and that of *Redemption* is peculiarly ascribed to the Blessed *Jesus*, not but that the *Father* and *Holy Ghost* did equally act therein as *GOD*, but because *Christ* suffered in his *Humanity* for our Salvation.

§ 30. In short since all Christians Agree, That there can be but *One Almighty God*, It follows that if the *Son* be *God*, and the *Holy Ghost* be *God*, then the *Trinity* must necessarily be *One and the same God*, for it is altogether Absurd and Impossible, that there can be Three distinct Minds or Essences, which are *Almighty* or *Supream*.

§ 31. That the *Son* is (a) *God*, even *God* (b) *Eternal* and (c) *Almighty* (d) *Creator* of Heaven and Earth, (e) *God over all blessed for evermore*, is manifest in Scripture, and shall be proved at large in the Chapter of the *Messiah*, and that he is *One* with the *Father* is expressly asserted, *Joh. 10. 30.* So that all Expressions in Scripture, that Render
Christ

(a) Joh. 1. 3.

* Tit. 3. 4. 5.

† Joh. 1. 36.

Jude 1. 1.

(a) 1 Joh. 5.

20.

(b) Joh 8 58.

Heb. 13. 8.

(c) Col. 2. 9.

Heb. 1. 3.

(d) Joh. 1. 3.

(e) Rom. 9 5.

Christ Inferior to the *Father*, or the like,
 could be understood of his *Human Nature*,
 of His *Personal Office* or Relation, and
 of His *Divinity*.

§ 32. But besides the exprefs Texts of
 Scripture, It seems to me *That Christ is God*
 on these three Considerations.

§ 33. First if *Christ* were not *God*, He
 were not to be Worshipped, for *God* is a
Jealous God, and will not † Give his Glory * Exod. 20. 5.
 Another, but All the Angels of *God* are to † Isa. 42. 8.
 Worship *Christ*, and All Men are to Honour || Heb. 1. 6.
 him, and not with an Inferior degree of
 worship, but As they Honour the * Father, * Joh. 5. 23.
 and at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee shall
 bow, which sure is the humblest posture † Phil. 2. 10.
 the highest Adoration, And Blessing and
 Honour and Power shall be unto him that sitteth
 on the Throne, and UNTO the Lamb for ever Rev. 5. 13.
 and ever.

§ 34. Secondly, *Christ* is the Legislator
 of the Evangelical Law, He is the Author
 of that Gospel which Prescribes to Christi-
 ans the Conditions of Repentance, and the
 Terms of Salvation, He Repeals the Ordi-
 nances, and the Ceremonial Laws of the
 Jews, which being ordained by *God* could Acts 6. 14.
 not be Repeal'd but by *God*, He Abolishes
 the Old Covenant of Works and Institutes
 a new Covenant of Faith, and all this by
 his proper Authority, not as the Prophets and
 such

such as acted as *Servants by Commission, whose Style was *Thus saith the Lord*, but as a Compleat Lawgiver himself, But I say unto you, Mat. 5. 22, 28, I give you a New Commandment, Joh. 13. 32. and so acts as Master over his own House, Heb. 3. 6. the Church, which is, *The House of the Living God*, 1 Tim. 3. 15.

§ 35. Thirdly, If Christ were not God but a meer Man, tho' Inspir'd with Grace above measure, yet he might have been Tainted with Sin as all the Prophets and Apostles and other Inspired Persons were at least with Original Sin, and then he could not have been (as he was) a Pure and Immaculate Oblation, without spot or blemish, Nor could he be a Proper Sacrifice for the Sins of others, if he had any Sin of his own, and therefore all those who would avoid that Horrid Blasphemy should conclude with the Evangelist, that *The Word is God*, Joh. 1. 1.

§ 36. Nor is it less evident that *The Holy Ghost is God*, for he is *The Spirit of God*, and the Spirit of God is God. If the Spirit of a Man who is composed of *Flesh* as well as *Spirit*, do's in Scripture Language signify the Man, can any body doubt but the Spirit of God, who is altogether Spirit, does in Scripture Language signify God, If every Attribute of God is God, because God is Indivisible

invisible, can it be doubted but that the Spirit of God is God, especially when We find the Words God, and Holy Ghost promiscuously used in Scripture, and the word Spirit frequently taken for God.

§ 37. Thus David expresses himself, Sam. 23. 2, 3. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, The God of Israel said, and, Psal. 138. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence, that is, from thee, so Eph. 4. 30. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, that is, Grieve not God: so Isa. 8. I heard the Voice of the Lord, but this word was the Holy Ghost, as appears, Acts 8. 25. thus, 1 Cor. 6. 19. your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, that is, 2 Cor. 13. 16. of the Living God, so a Lye to the Holy Ghost is a Lye unto God, Acts 5. 3. The Holy Ghost spake by the Prophets, and apostles: Mat. 10. 20. that is God spake by them, Heb. 1. 1. so 1 Job. 5. 6. The Spirit is Truth, i. e. God is Truth, and so the same gifts which are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 12. 4. are derived from the Father, Ja. 1. 17. and from the Son: Eph. 1. 7. and what is conceived by the Holy Ghost is the begotten Son of God, and the same Spirit which is called by the Name of Spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 4. is, v. 5. called Lord, and v. 6. is called God: in short the works of God are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as Creation,

ation, *Psal.* 33. 6. *Regeneration*, *Joh.* 3. 5. *Sanctification*, *Rom.* 8. 2. *2 Cor.* 3. 18. in fine, We Worship the *Holy Ghost*, We pray to him, The Apostles Creed obliges us to believe in him, We are baptiz'd in his Name, and all the Antient Fathers and Primitive Christians, (some few Hereticks excepted) believed the *Holy Ghost* to be God, and it is so expresly declared in the *Constantinopolitan Creed*, so that it seems to me that Christians who believe the *Holy Scriptures* are without excuse if they deny the Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*.

§ 38. As for those who say that the *Holy Spirit* is rather a *Quality* than a *Person*, they might soon be Undeceived, if they would consider, that *Actions* are attributed to the *Holy Ghost* which a *Person* may, but a *Quality* alone could not perform, as to Re-
 prove, *Joh.* 16. 8, 13, 14. to bear Witness v. 15, 26. to search Mysteries, *1 Cor.* 2. 10, 11. to distribute Gifts as He will, *1 Cor.* 12. 2, 11. to appoint Bishops, *Acts* 20. 28. and to Glorify Christ, *Joh.* 16. 14. and to speak, and to assume a shape.

§ 39. But if after all this, Men who are Ignorant of *Divine Nature* and Operation, will still Criticize upon the word *Person*, They may know, that the Word *Person* is not thought to be adequate to the Thing, nor perhaps any other Word we can think

on, but is used by way of *Analogy* and Representation, in conformity to the constant usage of the *Catholick Church*, and suits with the Scripture Expression in our *English Translation* of *Heb. 1. 3.* but by it is not intended to distinguish *Degrees*, but to signify *Order*, and a manner of Subsistence; so that the *Persons* may be distinguished from one another, without dividing the *Divine Essence* between Them, or separating the *Persons* from it. So that the word *Person* imports, that the *Father* is not the *Son*, nor the *Son* the *Holy Ghost*; that each of them is *Alius*, but not *Aliud*: another *Person* but not another *thing*: And this distinction of *Persons* do's by no means contradict their being *one and the same God*. Since the *Divine Essence* is the same in Them all.

§ 40. So that the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, being in it self so *believable*, that the Wit of Man is not capable of *knowing* the contrary (as it do's in the Article of *Transubstantiation*) and it being sufficiently Attested by the Word of God in *Scripture*, and Confirm'd by the constant Approbation of the *Catholick Church*, and either *Implied* or *Expressed* in all the Authentick *Creeds*, there can be no doubt, but that every Christian may and ought to believe it, as the *Fundamental Article of Religion*, and absolutely
Ne-

St. Aug.
Tom. 4. pag.
228.

Necessary for every Man in the ordinary way of Salvation.

§ 41. But since the *Divine Nature* is Incomprehensible, there is no Necessity of Inquiring farther into it than is *Revealed*. It seems enough, if we entertain the most honourable Thoughts of God, that We are Capable of, and believe of the *Trinity* what the *Scripture* has Testify'd concerning it.

C H A P. IV.

Of RELIGION.

IT being Certain and Manifest, That there is a God, who Created Us by his Power, and Preserves Us by his Providence; 'Tis the highest reason that he shou'd be Adored and Worshipped by his Creatures: And this *Worship of God*, is what is called *Religion*.

§ 2. And certainly no *Worship* can be acceptable or pleasing to God, but that which is agreeable to his own *Will* and Prescription; and this shews the necessity of *Revelation*, since the *Will of God* cannot be otherwise Manifested or Discovered unto Men.

§ 3. But it may be Objected, That Reason is a Natural and Universal Revelation, and since *Publication* is of the Essence of Laws, so that it is not *Just*, that any Man should be Condemn'd for Transgressing a Law, which he could not possibly have notice of, It therefore seems more likely, that Reason, which is common to all Men, should be the standard of Religion, than *Revelation*, which (in comparison with the whole World)

World) is communicated but to a few.

§ 4. To which I answer, That tho' *Reason* does Teach Us to Obey *The Will of God* when known, yet it could never come to know *the Will of God* in the matter and manner of Worship Requir'd by *God*, but by *Revelation*, Nevertheless it seems that (to leave Men without excuse) no Man will be Judged or Condemned but for Transgressing that Universal Law of *Reason*, which is natural to him, Our first Parent *Adam* did by his wilful disobedience Transgress *this Law*, and besides the *Original Sin* deriv'd to all Mankind from *Him*, every Person of Age has added actual Transgressions of his own, so that We are all under Sin, even against the Natural Law of Reason.

§ 5. And how to get *Pardon* for these Sins, *Natural Reason* alone could never find out, without *Revelation*, for The Wit of Man, which cannot conceive how an *Infinite Justice* can Pardon Sins, could much less discover, what Atonement could be made to an *Infinite Justice* for our Sins, *Natural Reason* could never find out how *Justice* and *Mercy* are mixed in the *Divine Nature*, so that each of them is of *Infinite Efficacy*, without Interfering with the other; And therefore it was absolutely necessary, That a *Revelation* should be made, to Inform Us,
(show upon

few. Upon what Terms We might *Hope* for
Mercy, and in what Circumstances we
should *fear* Justice.

§ 6. But this Gospel Revelation do's not establish a *New Law*, to Those to whom it ever was preach'd, on the Contrary they shall be Judg'd by the Law of Reason, which Their own Consciences will testifie against Them, to have often Transgress'd.

§ 7. And even to *Christians*, The Gospel do's
 so much establish a *New Law*, as Pub-
 lish A Pardon to Them upon *New Condi-*
tions, viz. of believing that *Jesus is the Christ*,
 and that *The Father Son and Holy Ghost are*
one God, and of entring into a Covenant
 (by *Water Baptism*) to Obey the Ord-
 inances of *Christ*, and of actual Obedience
 to his precepts, by a *holy life* in Thought,
 Word, and Deed.

8. So that Sinners are not condemn'd, for not believing the *Gospel*, but for transgressing the Natural Law of *Reason*, and for the Rebellion of Their *Will* against Their *Understanding*, for as a *Traitor* who might be pardon'd upon taking the Oath of Fidelity, which he Refuses, and is executed, suffers for his *Treason*, and not for Refusing the Oath, So all Men having willfully disobey'd The Commands of God, and follow'd the dictates of their own *Reason*; are punish'd

nish'd for their *Rebellion*, and not for Their *Unbelief*, and it is great mercy to Give any of Them a *Pardon*, upon such Conditions as it pleases God to Prescribe, which surely are favourable and easy, when They consist in *Faith* upon Undeniable Miracles and the Testimony of Simple Undesigning Men, of what They *saw* and *knew*, which They confirm'd with Their death, and in *Obedience* to the Law of *Purity* and *Holiness*; which every body would readily embrace, if it were not disagreeable to Their *Corruptions*, and if it did not make *Reformation* an Essential part of *Repentance*.

§ 9. Nor does *Justice* Require, That this *Pardon* should be Publish'd, to more than God intends to forgive, and tho' it will effectually extend to all Nations in his good Time, yet We who have the benefit of it Now, should rather be thankful for that great and distinguishing favour than Impeach the *Mercy* of God, because it is not extended farther than He thinks fit.

§ 10. By what has been said, The Necessity of *Revelation* appears, for without it 'Tis Impossible for Men to know the *Resurrection* of the dead, what *atonement* to be made for Sin, what *Worship* God do Require, or what *Sacrifice* or Oblation will be acceptable to Him; Whoever therefore will chooseth the *True Religion* must found

it upon *Divine Revelation*, so that all We have to do, is to examine and compare the four Religions which are extant, and to adhere to that which shews the best evidence of *Divine Revelation*, and prescribes such a Scheme of *Virtue* and *Holiness*, as may be Worthy of God.

§ 11. And surely, first, The Pagan or *Heathen Religion* will not bear the Test, since it do's not pretend to any *Divine Revelation* at all, but is purely the Invention of *Superstitious Men*: The Number and vicious Nature of their Gods renders that Religion equally Ridiculous and Infamous. The People knew well enough that they were no Gods, but vile and malicious Men, and some of them were Canoniz'd for that very reason of being eminently Wicked. There was no Scheme of *Virtue* or *Piety* in their Religion, tho' there was some in their Philosophy; on the contrary, their Sacrifices were Cruel, their Rites and Devotions were filthy and obscene; they Worship'd Evil Spirits as well as those they esteem'd Good, and not only Men, Planets, and Elements, but even brute Beasts, Diseases, and Vices, were the Objects of their Worship and Adoration.

§ 12. Nor, 2dly. Will the Mahometan Religion give us any difficulty, when the Life and Designs of that Impostor are understood to be Wicked and Worldly; his Aim

was *Grandeur and Dominion*, his *Doctrine and Rewards* were *Beasty and Luxurious*, chiefly consisting in *Coeundi & comedendi voluptate* : And the *Means* prescribed to propogate that *Religion*, are the worst in the *World*, the most inconsistent with *Piety*, and the most contrary to the *Nature* of a *Merciful and Wise God*, viz. *Cruelty and Ignorance*.

§ 13. This bloody *Religion* of *Mahomet* is founded in *War and Violence*, and supported by the same *Methods* : It *Encourages Revenge*, and *Indulges Lust*, and its *Alchoran* abounds with so many gross *Absurdities and Impertinences*, that 'tis no wonder that they should make it a *Fundamental Maxim*, *That their Religion shou'd not be Inquir'd into*, altho' such a *Prohibition* is a certain mark of *Imposture* ; for *they who are Evil hate the Light*.

§ 14. But, 3dly. The *Jewish Religion* is indeed founded upon *Divine Revelation*, Attested by many publick and stupendious *Miracles*, and therefore must be allow'd to proceed from *GOD*. It seems to me to differ from the *Christian Religion* as a *Child* do's from a *Man*, which was to grow to it in time, and to be in *Essence* the same : For tho' the *Jewish Religion* consisted in one *Article*, viz. *The Belief in God*, yet was the *Trinity* comprehended therein. And if the

Jews

Jews had not such express Discoveries of that Great *Mystery* as *Christians* have under the *Gospel*, yet they were not without some Indications of it, for the Promise of the *Messiah* was made to *Them*, and to their *Children*: and they were sensible, that the *Prophets* were Inspir'd by the *Holy Ghost*: So that it seems the great Difference between *Jews* and *Christians* is in point of Time; for their Religion Represented the *Saviour* of the World in Types and Promises, and the Christian Religion comprehends him in Reality and Accomplishment, The *Jews* still expected a *Messiah* to come; and *Christians* believe that the *Messiah* is already come; and that the Blessed *Jesus* is the **C H R I S T**.

§ 15. Besides, The *Jewish* Religion was in effect Appropriated to their own Country *The Holy Land*, since all were to worship at the Temple in *Jerusalem*, and was never design'd for the whole World: and as it was confin'd in place, so was it also limited in Time, for it was to determine upon the Advent of the *Messiah*, and to continue no longer but till *Shilo* should come.

§ 16. So that it remains to consider, and examine the Reasons and Arguments, which *Christians* produce to prove that *Jesus* is the *Messiah*. And as it will be unreasonable to expect *Demonstration* in a point of Faith, or

to demand clearer proof than the *matter will bear*, and the *nature of the thing will admit of*; so it will be as unreasonable to expect any Man's Assent hereunto, but upon such Motives and Reasons as may satisfy a Pious and Discreet Man, which I hope will be found in Chap. 11. *Of the Christian Religion*, and in Chap. 14. *Of the Messiah*: But before we come to that, we must in Method find out, Who is the *Judge of Controversy*; with what *faculty* must he Judge, and by what *Rule of Faith* must he be directed?

C H A P. V.

Of the Judge of Controversy.

§ 1. **H**AVING already shewn, that it is necessary, That every Man who aims at *Happiness* should embrace *A Religion*; I come now to Inquire, *What Religion* I should be of, in order to obtain *Everlasting Felicity*, and since *Protestants, Papists, Jews, Turks*, and Others, do warmly Controvert this Point, it is necessary to Inquire *Who must be Judge of the Controversy*; that is, *which* of these Zealous pretenders must choose for me, or whether, (since 'tis at my own peril,) I ought not rather to Choose for my Self.

§ 2. And 'tis certain, I must choose for my self, if I will have any Religion at all, for it is not *my Religion*, if it be not of *my Choice* or Approbation; nor can it possibly be otherwise, but *That every Man for himself* must be *Judge of the Controversy*, for if any Pretender claims a *Right* to choose for *Me*, yet must I be *Judge* for *my self*, even of that *Pretence*, and as I am, or am not Convinc'd of that *Right*, may choose whether I will submit to it, or no.

§ 3. And indeed, It is equally Absurd to say ; That another should *Judge* for me, as that another should *believe* for me, And sure who ever pretends to *choose* Religion for Another, ought to be *punished* for him too, if He leads him into any damnable Error.

§ 4. But it is absolutely Impossible, That any Man can *Believe* without *Judging* for himself, for what is *Believing*, but *Judging the thing to be true*, and to what purpose are Reasons, Motives, and Arguments offer'd, but to *Convince the Understanding* ; and thereby determine the *Choice* : And is not every Man then *Judge for himself*, Whether those Reasons, Motives, and Arguments are good and efficacious in his Opinion or not, and is his *Belief* or *Disbelief*, any other than the Result of his *Judgment*, that They are, or are not so.

§ 5. Besides, If Men are not to *Judge* for themselves, there can be no Sin in *Misbelief* ; for He who is compelled blindfold to follow Another, can be in no fault, if he be *Misguided* and led astray.

§ 6. So that they are much to blame, who knowing, That it is the noblest Function of the Mind, to *measure Truth*, and that it is the first step of *Wisdom* to *distinguish between True and False*, should nevertheless deny Men the Benefit of their *Understanding*, and there-

thereby in effect Unman Them, by depriving them of the best Use of their *Reason*: But all their Artifices and Endeavours are in vain, for no body can *Believe*, but as he is *Convinc'd*; that is, until *he thinks he has reason to believe*. The Man may be *deceived* by plausible Arguments, because They have the force of good ones to Him, who thinks them so; but no Man can be forced to *Believe*, nor can *Believe* at all, without some *Reason*, (Real or Imaginary) which satisfies Him, And even They, who believe things *beyond their Capacity*, or *disagreeable* to their other Notions, have always some *Reason* why they do *Believe*, and which they *Judge* stronger, than the *Improbability* on the contrary side.

§ 7. And this is far from setting up a *private Spirit* fanatically, and in stead of *Revelation* to direct Others; on the contrary, it is placing every Man's *Reason* on its proper Throne, to direct himself; for this is not a Judgment of *Authority*, but a Judgment of *Discretion*, to distinguish Pretences, and finally to Judge for himself, what he is to *believe* and to *do*, according to our Saviour's Advice, Luke 12. 57. *And why even of your selves judge ye not what is right?* And according to St. Ambrose's Opinion, *Veniant plane* Epist. 23. *si qui sunt ad Ecclesiam, Audiant cum populo, non ut Quisquam Judex (intellige aliorum) resideat,*

resideat, sed Unusquisq; de suo Affectu habet examen, & eligat Quem sequatur. And 'tis this very Crime, of Entertaining Opinions upon trust, and without examining and Judging for Ones self, as if Men were bewitch'd That Melchior Canus Imputes to Heathens and Hereticks.

Lib. 12. c. 4.

§ 8. And indeed, since our Blessed Saviour has foretold, That there would arise such Hypocritical Impostors, shewing Signs and Wonders, as if it were possible would seduce the very Elect, Mark 13. 22. False Christs, false Prophets, Matth. 24. 24. Men that would preach a New Gospel, and deserved to be accused, Gal. 1. 8. And has therefore warned us to take heed that no Man deceive us, Matth. 24. 4. and advis'd us not to believe every Spirit, 1 Joh. 4. 1. It is manifest, That we ought to search and look, Joh. 7. 52. to Inquire diligently, and Examine strictly, the Doctrines and Designs of Pretenders, and not blindly submit to we know not what, and take our Religion upon trust, but at least use as much caution in our Eternal Concerns, as worldly Wise Men do in their Temporal Affairs.

9. Besides, Our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles have Commanded this Examination, that we may not be Impos'd upon. And since it is the greatest Curse that can be inflicted on a People, to be given over

to

to strong Delusion, That they should believe a Lie, We are exhorted to try the Spirits whether they are of God, that we may not be deceiv'd by those false Prophets which are come into the World. And we are directed to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is Good; that is, to Examine and Judge for our Selves, and to adhere to that which we find best, and not be seduced by cunning Pretences. 2 Thes. 2. 11. 1 Joh. 4. 1. 2 Thes. 5. 21.

§ 10. And indeed, Why should Men that have Understanding be led like Beasts that have no understanding? Nay, Why should any Man that is not blind be led at all, especially by such as are more blind than himself? Let him be shewn the Way by those who know it better, but not forced to go it against his Will, even after he has discovered that it is not the Right Way, and that they did for their own Ends misguide him. Is it not unaccountable, That any Religion that deserves to be Embrac'd, should be kept from being Examin'd? How can one give a Reason for the hope that is in him, unless he understands the reason for it, and Judges it to be a good one? nay, How is it possible to believe at all, without Conviction, That the Proposition is true?

§ 11. But it may be Objected, That the Faith required by the Gospel, is a Faith without Doubting, and where there is no Doubt-
ing, Mat 21. 21.

ing, what need any *Examination* or Judgment; but the Objection is Captious; For first, this is spoken to such as had already examin'd and judg'd for themselves, and were *settled in the Faith*. And, 2dly, *Faith* there Imports a *Trust* and Confidence in the Power and Goodness of God and Christ, whom they own'd, and which every Christian ought to have *without Doubting*. And 3dly, At most; it extends but to the firm belief of the *Word of God*, which every body (who owns it such) believes *without Doubting*; that is, he has no doubt, but that it is *True* in the *sense* GOD intended it, and he can't do otherwise, without Questioning the *Veracity* of GOD, which he has already judged Unquestionable, word on

§ 12. But this does not Impeach our Liberty of Doubting, Examining and Judging, What is conformable to that *Word of God*, and what not? for either we must use our *Reason* to distinguish *Pretenders*, or we may be enslaved to the *first* that offers: For if an *Apostle* and an *Imposter* should come, and both do *Miracles*, as *Simon Peter* and *Simon Magus* did, either Men must take the *first Comer*, or the most *Confident Pretender*, or must Judge for themselves; and by examination of *The Purity of the Doctrine*, and the *Circumstances* of the Parties, and the use of their own *Reason*, must at last determine for

for themselves, whether they will follow the *Magician*, or adhere to the *Saint*.

§ 13. And so it is as to the Interpretation of the *Word of God*; for tho' all Christians agree, That the *Word is True*, in the sense the *Holy Ghost* intends it, yet Men may doubt, and do dispute and differ about that sense. *Christ* taking Bread, said, *This is my Body*, which is a spiritual expression, says *Calvin*, It is a figurative expression, says *St. Augustine*; and the *Church of England*, and imports a *Real*, but not a *Corporal* presence of *Christ* in the Sacrament:

Figura ergo
est Aug. de
Doctr.
Christ. Lib.
3. c. 16.

It does mean a *Corporal* presence of *Christ's Body* in the Eucharist *Consubstantially* with the Bread and Wine, says *Luther*. But the *Papists* (against their *Knowledge*, and the testimony of all their Senses) affirm, That it signifies a *Corporal* presence *Transubstantially*; so that the Bread and Wine are quite vanish'd and gone, tho' at the same time they see them there, and know by their outward accidents that they are there. What must a poor Christian do in a case so perplex'd? Probably he will adhere to one of these Opinions; and won't he consider Which, and examine Why and Wherefore? Won't he use his Reason in the Inquiry, and according to his Judgment make his Election?

§ 14. And if it be said, That The Fathers will direct Us, and that The Council of Trent

Trent has decreed, That the Scripture should be interpreted according to the Unanimous consent of the *Fathers*, Upon examination it will be found, That there are few or none of the Texts of Scripture, now in controversy between *Protestants* and *Papists*, wherein the *Fathers* have Unanimously agreed, for so even a *Papist* expresses himself. *Pauca sunt Scripturae loca quae Sancti Patres varii varie Interpretati non fuerunt*; besides, The *Fathers* have not expressed Themselves so clearly in many points, but that there remained great Doubts and Contentions, even about Their meaning, so that if the Dictates of the *Fathers* were supposed to be of full Authority, yet is an Inquiring *Christian* left to his own Reason, with such Assistance as he can get, to find out and determine, what Their Sentiments were: in short, The *Fathers* were Good Men, and therefore did not err maliciously, but They were Men, and therefore did sometimes Err, and were not *Infallible*.

§ 15. And if it be said, that the Church will direct us, are we not still put to the same difficulty, and the same use of our Reason, to find out which of the pretending Churches is in the Right? if the Dispute was about the Decree of a General Council, viz. Whether it were called Canonically, did act freely, or define Catholiquely, must not every

every Man Judge for himself? Nay, If the Dispute were about the *Gospel* it self, Men must use their *Reason* to determine, What *Scriptures* are Canonical, and what *Gospels* are True, and in what *Sense*, and must finally judge for Themselves, else, Why don't we receive St. *Clement's* Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as well as St. *Paul's* to the *Hebrews*, and the *Gospel* of St. *Bartholomew* as well as the *Gospel* of St. *John*? or How were *Jews*, *Heathens* and *Atheists* converted to the *Christian Faith* in the Primitive Times, when the Church was Ignorant of *Inquisitions* and *Dragoons*, and other Instruments of *Persecution* and *Cruelty*, and knew no other Method of making Profelites, but by *Conviction*.

§ 16. And surely that ought to be the Method still, And when the Apostle tells us, 1 *Joh.* 4. 2. *Hereby ye shall know the Spirit of God*; it will be our Duty to examine *whereby*, and judge whether the pretending Spirit will bear that *Test*; when the Prophet speaks to us of a *Burden*, we ought to Inquire *what Burden*, and consider how to Jer. 23. 33. Regard it, whether as a Prophecy or an Imposture. And if the Apostle speaks to us as *Wise Men*, and bids us judge *what he says*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. surely we ought to consider well as *Wise Men*, that we may judge *right*, and not as Fools take things upon *trust*,
and

and consent blindfold to any determinate sense of Words, without the best Examination we are capable of.

§ 17. But there is a popular Objection remaining, *viz.* That *ignorant* People are not as capable of Judging, as *Doctors, Fathers,* and *Councils*, and it is true, but it is not to the purpose; for they are capable to judge and believe as much as is requir'd of them: They are capable to Judge, That The Holy Scriptures are *The Word of God*, that the Doctrine of the Gospel is a Doctrine of *Virtue*; and that *Bread* is *Bread*, and *Wine* is *Wine*, when they see it and taste it; and that an *Image* is but an *Idol*, and that a *strange Language* is neither so Edifying, nor so Intelligible to them as their *Mother Tongue*.

§ 18. However, It is not denied, but that every *Christian* ought to get the best Advice and Assistance he can, for the Salvation of his *Soul*, as he do's for the preservation of his *Health* and *Estate*: But still he is *the sole Judge for himself*, whether he will have any *Lawyer* or *Physitian*, and whom, and how far he will follow their Advice; and if he be told, that his *Divine* is seducing him, his *Lawyer* betraying him, and his *Physitian* poysoning him, He has a right to examine the Matter, and to judge for himself; and as he happens to be *Convinc'd*,
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he will keep One, and Discard t'other, as he thinks fit.

§ 19. So that the fallacy lies in confounding *Prudence* with *Necessity*; for 'tis a very different thing to say, That in *Prudence* one should do so and so, and of *Necessity* you must do so and so: The former leaves a Man *Judge for himself*, and even Imports *Discretion* in Judging well, the later deprives one of his *Reason*, and of the *natural Right* of Judging, and makes a Man a meer *Machine*, as senseless as a *Bell*, which sounds as the Sexton is dispos'd to Ring it.

§ 20. There is also another thredbare Objection very often made against this *natural Right* of Judging for ones self, Viz. That on occasions *Heresies*, *Schisms* and *Divisions* in the Church, and it is true, but what then; Is it not better to *Divide*, than *Unite* in damnable *Error*, and are not The *Idolatry* and *Superstition* introduced by the Tyranny of *The Church of Rome*, more fatal to *Piety* and *Christianity* than the difference of Mens Opinions, but if not, yet 'tis neither *Reasonable* nor *Just*, to destroy a *Natural Right*, because it has Evil Consequences? Is it not from *Free-will* and *Passion* that all our Sins and Errors are derived; and yet 'tis certain, that we have both *Free-will* and *Passions*. God Almighty if he had so pleased might have prevented all *Sin* and all *Error*; but for reasons undiscoverable
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by us, but known to the *Divine Wisdom*, he thought fit to permit both, and to suffer *Mens Opinions*, and their *Actions*, to be Govern'd by *themselves*, and to suffer *Divisions* and *Contentions* in the Church, even in the Apostles days, and ever-since, and probably to the End of the World, and even to foretel that *Heresies must be among us*; That *they which are approv'd may be made manifest*.

1 Cor. I. 10,
II.

1 Cor. II. 19.

§ 21. But what need more be said on this Subject, then that our *Blessed Saviour* by appealing to our *Senses*, and our *Understanding*, allows, that Men are *Judges for themselves*; Behold my Hands and my Feet

Luke 24. 39.

(says he) that it is I my Self, handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not *Flesh and Bones* as you see me have: And in effect he declares, that he would not blame the *Jews* for their *Incredulity*, If His *pure Doctrine* and stupendous *Miracles* had not been sufficient to Convince reasonable Men; And that it was their *Hatred of Him and his Father* that hindered its having that Effect upon them.

John 15. 24.

§ 22. But because the *Adversaries of Truth* do designedly Endeavour to puzzle us, by confounding of Terms, We must distinguish, not only between the *Judge* and the *Rule*, but also between *Judges of Right*, and *Judges of Faith*.

§ 23. As to the former, It must be allowed, That what has been or can be said

of the *Scripture* being *Judge* in matters of Faith, must be understood of its being the *Rule* to Judge by; for the *Scripture* is like the *Law*, a dead Letter in it self, unless it be rightly Interpreted and Applied; and the question will be, whether every *private Man*, with such help as he can get, from the *Church, Fathers, Councils, Books, and Friends*, should Interpret and apply the *Scripture* the best he can for the Salvation of his *own Soul*; or whether there be any *Church* or Society upon Earth, that is *Infallible*, and has *Authority* to Interpret and Apply *Scripture* as it pleases, and Impose *what Terms of Salvation* it thinks fit?

§ 24. As to the other; There is great difference between a Judge of *Right*, and a Judge of *Faith*; for the Judge of *Right* binds others by Virtue of his External Authority, which is given to him, either by *Law*, or the *consent of Parties*, and therefore must be submitted to, whether Men like it or no; but the Judge of *Faith* can only bind himself, for he can have no Influence but what is *Internal*, and can produce *Assent*. It cannot force, but must persuade; and therefore must of necessity be finally Resolved, not into *Authority*, but into the *Reason and Conviction* of every Particular Man.

In rebus enim fidei & quæ conscientiam tangunt non satis est dicere, volumus & Mandamus; Ferus in Actis 157.

§ 25. For as Mr. Thorndike observes, When all is done; Men must and Will be Judges for themselves, and 'tis highly Reasonable They should, since every Man shall bear his own Burden, and shall give account of himself to God, so that it is manifest both in Nature, and Reason, That every Man has the choice of his own way of Worship at his own Peril, according to that memorable saying of Tertullian, *Humani Juris, & Naturalis Potestatis est, Unicuique quod putaverit colere.*

Gal. 6. 5.

Rom. 14. 12.

Tertul. ad
Scapul.

§ 26. And therefore, tho' Optatus rightly concludes, That Religion must be deriv'd from Scripture, Ergo in Terris (says he) *de hac re, nullum poterit reperire Judicium, De Cælo querendus est Judex, sed ut quid pulsamus ad Cælum quum habemus hic Evangelio,* for there can be no Touchstone of Religion but the Word of God (in Scripture) yet that it self can be no Rule to any Man, but in the sense he Understands it, so that of Necessity He must Judge for himself.

Adv. Parm.

§ 27. By what has been said, the Barbarity of forcing Mens Consciencs is justly Condemned, for Force can only compel People to Dissemble and Lie; it is Conviction alone that can Induce Belief. However this Christian (or rather Natural) Liberty of Judging for our selves must not be abus'd to Licentiousness, Christians must be Meek and

and *Prudent, Humble and Modest*, in using this Liberty, with due Respect and Deference to their *Spiritual Guides*, and the *Authority* that is over Them, in *Church or State*.

§ 28. As first in all cases, where a Christian differs in Opinion, from the *Society* and *Communion* he is of, he ought to Consult *Proper Persons* of the *Society*, and to enquire diligently, and Inform himself the best he can, and if he has any *Byass*, it should be in favour of his *Society*, so far at least as to wish and desire, that it may rather be found in the *Right*, than otherwise.

§ 29. Secondly, If after all his Endeavours, he still differs in Opinion from his *Society*, yet he ought to keep his private Opinion to himself, without disturbing the *Tranquility of Church or State*, unless the *Denial* of it be required in the *Terms of Communion* with his *Society*, or unless he be convinc'd, That it is necessary for the Service of God, and the Salvation of Souls, that it should be published, wherein he should be very well appris'd, and should take great care, That neither *Faction, Interest, nor spiritual Pride* have any share in influencing his Resolution.

§ 30. Thirdly, If the Opinion Relates to *Rites, Ceremonies, or Discipline* of the *Church*, not sinful, that is, *not prohibited by God*, he

must Acquiesce, because *Criminal Schism* is a damnable Sin, and inconsistent with *Charity*. And there is no doubt, but that every National Church has full *Authority* in these indifferent Things, so that it is Arrogant and Unchristian to Rebel against it; for where there is *Government*, The Judgment of *private Men* must submit to the *Law*: And it is as ridiculous to disobey a Canon of the *National Church*, as an *Act of Parliament*, under pretence of *not liking it*, Nothing can excuse Disobedience to either, but its being against the *Law of God*, which indeed supercedes and vacates all *humane Authority*, but it will highly concern Them who alledge this, to be very well able to prove it: for *if the Law be not sinful, Disobedience to it certainly is.*

§ 31. And upon this foot, I should censure *Protestants* for separating from the *Church of Rome*, in whose *Communion* They were; If, First, The *Supremacy* of that Church were not *Usurp'd* and *Tyranical*; And, Secondly, If the *Superstition* and *Idolatry* of that Church, were not manifestly *sinful*, in the *Worship* of *Insensible Images*, and the *Invocation* of dead *Saints*, and in the *Adoration* of corruptible *Bread* and *Wine*, instead of the *Incorruptible God*. And, Thirdly, If these and other sinful *Practises* and *Opinions* were not made necessary

Terms

Terms of Communion with that Church, which Excommunicates all those who will not *profess* and *embrace* the many and manifest *Errors* which she has arbitrarily Decreed, to be absolutely necessary to Salvation.

§ 32. And thus having settled the *Judge of Controversy*, viz. *Every Man for himself*, and at his own Peril; I proceed to Enquire with what *Faculty*, the *Examination* and *Choice* of our Religion is to be made.

of Communion with that Church
which excommunicates all those who will
not profit and obey the many and many
laws which the has arbitrarily De-
creed, to be absolutely necessary to sal-

vation. And thus having failed the Jews
of Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit, who
led as his own Father, I proceed to dispute
with what Church, the Excommunicated
Church of our Religion is to be made.

C H A P. VI.

Of REASON.

I. **H**AVING already shewn, First, That *Happiness* is the *End* which all Men do or ought to aim at ; And, Secondly, that *Wisdom* is the Art of attaining it ; And, Thirdly, That it cannot be acquir'd but from *God* : And, Fourthly, Nor by any other Means, but the Practice of *Religion* ; And, Fifthly, That every Man for himself must necessarily be *Judge*, what Religion he will choose ; I come now, Sixthly, to Inquire with what *Faculty* Men must Judge for Themselves, which undoubtedly must be their *Understanding*, The Ultimate and Consummate Act whereof is their *Reason*, and therefore I proceed to enquire into the Nature of *Humane Reason*, and the Use of it in Reference to *Religion*.

§ 2. *Reason* is a Comprehensive Word, and of various Acceptations, so that as well in *Scripture*, as in vulgar Use, it Imports divers Significations.

§ 3. First and principally, I take *Reason* for The Natural Rule of *Humane Duty*, by the Word *Natural*, I distinguish it from *Revelation*,

lation, and by the Word *Rule*, I mean that *Eternal Law* of Truth, Justice and other Virtues, prescrib'd by God for the Guidance of Men, and Imprinted in *Rational Nature*, and discoverable by the Light thereof, and by the Word *Duty*, I mean every Thing that Men are by Nature oblig'd to *believe*, or to *do*, every thing that is *Right* in Speculation or Practice, for *Reason* is *The Natural Rule of Right*, so that nothing can be *Right*, but what is Consonant to it.

§ 4. This *Rule of Right* is antecedent to all *Humane Laws*, and to it all *Humane Laws* ought to Conform, for it is *The Law of Humane Nature*, It is the Law mentioned by the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 14, 15.* which is by Nature written in Mens Hearts, It is *The Law of the Mind*, which all Men ought to obey, and as it is *Divine* in its Original, so it is unchangeable in its *Nature*, and may well be called *Right Reason*, for it is always *Right*, and of it 'tis truly Affirmed. *That it neither Deceives nor is Deceived;* And This *Rule or Law of Right Reason*, consists in *Right Principles*, and in *Consequences* rightly deduced from Them.

Nec decipitur Ratio,
neque decipit unquam.

§ 5. But forasmuch as *Principles* may be said to be the *Causes* of *Consequences*, and *Consequences* are the *Judgment* which the *Mind* makes, *Deduces* and *Infers* from *Principles*,

principles, therefore *Reason* is sometimes taken for the *Cause*, and sometimes for the *Judgment*.

§ 6. It is taken for the *Cause*, when it imports the Ground Motive or Inducement to the *Mind*, to form the Conclusion, Thus Pet. 3. 15. *The Reason of the Hope that is in you*, Imports the *Cause* or Ground of your Hope; so, Prov. 26. 16. *Than seven Men that can render a Reason*, that is, can shew the *Cause*: So Eccl. 7. 25. *Seek out Wisdom and the Reason of Things*, that is, the *Cause* of Things, and so it is, when We ask a *Reason* for This or That Opinion, We mean no more, but to enquire into the *Cause* or *Motive* which induced the *Mind* to determine so and so.

§ 7. And *Reason* is taken for *Judgment*, as well when it signifies The *Faculty* of the *Understanding* which makes the Determination, as when it means the Sentence or Determination which is given or made by that Faculty: It is by the *Faculty* of the *Understanding*, that the *Mind* apprehends, debates and Judges, and this *Apprehension* and debate is in order to *Judgment*, and would be of no Use without it, for to what purpose should One *Debate*, if he could not Judge, and since this *Debating* (or *Dispersive Thinking*) is called *Reasoning*, The *Faculty* from whence it arises is sometimes called

called *Reason* or *Judgment*, and so it is used, *Dan. 4. 36. My Reason return'd*, that is, *My Understanding*, v. 34. But the result of the *Debate*, and the *Sentence* or *Determination* of the *Understanding* upon the *Debate*, being the *Principal* and *Consummate Act* of the *Mind*, which *Renders the Thought Compleat*, is what I call *Reason*, for it is the *Reason* and *sense* of that *Man*, upon that *Subject*, at that *Time*.

§ 8. So that We ought carefully to distinguish when the Words *Reason* or *Judgment* are taken for The *Faculty* of the *Understanding* which makes the *Determination*, which I call *Ratio Ratiocinans*, And when They are taken for the very *Sentence* and *Determination* that is made, which I should call *Ratio Ratiocinata*, for if we say, *Your Reason is Impair'd*, or, *Your Judgment is Weak*, We Mean The *Faculty*, but if We say, *You act against your own Reason*, or, *Your Judgment is wrong*, We mean The *Determination* and final *Sentence* of the *Mind*.

§ 9. This being premis'd, I observe, That tho' the aforesaid *Divine Rule* of *Right Reason* is always the same in its self, and always *Right*, so that whoever *Acts* or *Thinks* contrary to it *Errs*, and *Acts* and *Thinks* unreasonably, yet in the *Use* and *Application* of it by particular *Persons*, It must (like the *Scripture* and all other *Rules*)

Rules) necessarily have different Influence over Men, according to *Their* Respective Degrees of Understanding, and *Their* different Judgment and Interpretation of it, and will be Right or Wrong to *Them* as *They* determine, for as a *Dyal*, tho' very exact, may by a wrong Position Misrepresent the Time of the Day, so *Reason*, tho' Right in it self, may nevertheless be Mistaken, or Misapplied, and Men through *Passion*, *Distemper*, or other *Infirmity*, May Mistake the *Rule* themselves, and Misrepresent it to others, for such is the Imperfection of our Faculties, that *We now see through a Glass darkly*, and some are foolish and *Reason like Children*, and others are Ungodly, and *Reason with themselves, but not aright*, so that nothing is more Common than to Infer different *Consequences* from the same *Principles*, Nay, Men differ even about *Principles*, so that some Think that *Reasonable*, which others Reject as Ridiculous and *Absurd*.

§ 10. It follows, that it is the *Judgment* of every Individual Person, that must Form or Interpret the Rule of *Reason* for himself, It can have no other Shape to *him*, but as *He* conceives it, according to the Old Maxim, *Quicquid Recipitur, Recipitur ad modum Recipientis*, And as the *Holy Scriptures* seem the *Word of God* to every Christian, in that sense

sense only, in which *He* understands it, so that only will seem *Right Reason* to Men, which *They* Respectively Conclude and Determine to be so, And it can't be otherwise, for That is *Their Reason* and Judgment, and so far ought to Govern *Them*, That *They* Sin if *They* Act against it, even when it is erroneous, for, *Qui Peccat contra Erroneam Conscientiam Peccat*, And in no Case whatsoever, should the *Will* of a Rational Creature Rebel against *His Understanding*.

§ 11. And tho' the *Mind* be as a *Balance*, which weighs the Proposition, and distinguishes between the *Heavy* and the *Light*, yet it does not always determine *Right*, for as a *Balance* may deceive One, if the *Beam* be Rusty, or the *Scales* uneven, so also may the *Mind* mistake, if the *Understanding* be Weak, or the *Passion* Violent, for Mens *Sentiments* are easily drag'd after their *Affections*, Yet how wrong soever the *Judgment* or *Conclusion* may be, it is nevertheless at that Time, The *Reason* of that Man, and the *Rule* He then Thinks He ought to walk by, and from which he cannot vary, without offending his *Conscience*.

§ 12. So that *Reason* (as I use the Word, and as it Relates to particular Men) is The Determination of The Mind upon Consideration,

ration, It is, The result of Comparative and Discursive Thinking, It is The Conclusion of the Syllogism, Or, The final Judgment of the Mind, upon that matter, at that Time, This is what the Person then Conceives to be The Rule of Right Reason, and with which therefore he ought to comply, for it is His Rule, and should direct him, and he is certainly guilty of Presumptuous Sin, if he Transgresses it, but cannot be Guilty of more than a Sin of Ignorance in complying with it, even tho' it were never so wrong.

§ 13. To sum up all briefly, *Reason* has a four fold Acceptation. 1st. *Reason* in General, or *Right Reason*, is *The Determination of God, or The Natural Rule of Right* appointed by God. 2^{ly}. *Reason* in particular, or *The Reason of a particular Man* is, *The Determination and Sentiment of that Man What is Right*, in short, the former is the Determination every One should make, and the later is the Determination he does make. 3^{ly}. Since no Determination can be made but by the Understanding, *Reason* is often taken Figuratively and Improperly for that Faculty; And, 4^{ly}. Because the *Mind* never determines but upon some Cause, Motive, or Inducement to do so, *Reason* is also figuratively and Improperly taken for the Cause, or Motive, which Induces the
Mind

Mind to make that Determination, all which acceptations of the Word *Reason* may appear in the ensuing Paragraph.

(a) Right.
Reason.

(b) His Reason.

(c) Under-
standing.

(d) Cause.

§ 14. (a) *Reason* forbids *Men* to do wrong, but the *Reason* (b) of a *Miser* prompts him to do any wrong which he may get by, for his *Reason* (c) is Corrupted, and the Reason (d) of it is, his Covetousness.

§ 15. And in this very Instance, it may be observ'd, That either that Person Thinks that he does wisely, in preferring *Gain* before *Justice*, and if so, That is his Rule, and he pursues it without any Remorse, or the least Reproach to himself, as thinking that he performs his *Duty*, Or He thinks otherwise, and then, 'tis not His *Reason*, but his *Will* Rebelling against His *Reason*, that renders him *Oppressive* and *Unjust*.

§ 16. And so I proceed to Observe, That Every *Mans Reason* or Sentiment Relates either to *Speculation* or *Practice*, if the former, It will be variously denominated according to the Ground or Cause of it, for if The *Judgment* or Sentiment be founded upon *Certainty*, It is called *Knowledge*, if on *Testimony*, it is called *Faith*, and if on *Probability*, it is called *Opinion*, all which are but *Reason* diversified by Circumstances, But if the Sentiment Relate to *Practice*, It may be stiled *Prudence*, for so That Person thinks

Thinks it, and whatever it be, It is His Practical Reason.

§ 17. But there seems to be a vast difference in the Operation of the *Mind*, between *Matters of Speculation* and *Practice*, for in *Matters of Practice*, as soon as the *Understanding* has debated and Judged what is, or is not, fit to be done, It is by help of the *Memory* offered to the *Will*, to be performed or avoided, according as it hath been Judged *Good or Evil*, and to Induce the Compliance of the *Will*, *Motives* and *Reasons* are propos'd, and if the *Will* Complies with the *Understanding*, then there is perfect *Tranquility* in the *Mind*, but if the *Will* refuses to Obey, and acts contrary to the *Understanding*, then there is a *Civil War* in the *Mind*, The sense of *Guilt* will produce *Shame*, and the *Understanding* will not cease to Reflect on the *Stubbornness* of the *Will*, and to Reproach its Folly, for *warring against the Law of the Mind*, and this Reflection arises from *Conscience*, or *The Knowledge of himself*, for He is *Conscious* that he has done amiss, *His Wickedness is Condemn'd by her own Witness*, and He knows, that His *Will* has Rebelled against His *Understanding*, And this Reflection of his *Conscience*, is, *The Worm that will never die, Nōte dieq; suum gestant in pectore Testem.* Rom. 7. 23.

§ 18. But in matters of *Speculation*, The *Will* is not concern'd in the *Determination*,

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but

but *indirectly*, for when the *Mind* has deliberated and debated, or as we say, *Reason'd* the matter, at length it comes to *Judgment* and Determination thereupon, and without Consulting the *Will*, the *Mind* assents Immediately, the very instant the *Determination* is made, for as soon as the *Mind* Judges the Proposition to be *True*, It *believes* it to be *True*, and indeed, The *Judgment* that it is *True*, and the *Assent* to its being so, are in effect but one and the (a) same thing. Now to discover the true extent and limits of *Reason* in matters of Religion, and what Assent is necessary in points of Faith, We must Inquire into the Motive and Foundation of such Assent, for *Reason* can require no greater firmness in the *Assent*, than there is Probability in the *Testimony*, and therefore to set this matter in a True Light, We must resort to our former Division of *Reason*, into *Knowledge*, *Opinion*, and *Faith*.

§ 19. *Knowledge*, is The Determination of the *Mind* upon *Certainty*, or a Sentiment founded upon what the *Mind* Thinks *Impossible* to be wrong, so that the *Mind* can't choose but (b) Assent, and 'tis not in the

(a) *Fides est Cogitatio cum assensu : Aquinas*

Quid est credere nisi Consentire verum esse quod dicitur : Aug

(b) An Argument *Necessary* and *Demonstrative* is such as being propos'd and understood, The *Mind* cannot choose but inwardly Assent unto it. *Hooker, Pref. p. 29*

Power of the *Will* to make it do otherwise,
 And this *Knowledge* is deriv'd, either, 1st.
 From *Self-evident Principles*, as That *the*
Whole is greater than a part, That *Contradi-*
ctory Propositions cannot be True, and the like;
 Or, 2^{ly}. From *Demonstration*, as that *The*
Three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two
Right Angles; Or, 3^{ly}. From the *Testimony*
of the Outward Senses, which (if perfect)
 give the most * *Infallible Proof* Men are Ca- * Acts 1. 31
 pable of, and the Certainty of all external
 Matters is known by Them; or, 4^{ly}. From
 the *Inward Sense*, or *Testimony of the Mind*,
 which I call *Conscience*, and is, *The Know-*
ledge a Man has of Himself.

§ 20. And tho' it is True, that *Knowledge*
 is not always Perfect, since it is often found-
 ed upon the *Outward Senses*, which in some
 Men are Imperfect, yet it is the highest
 degree of Certainty that Men are capable of,
 and therefore whether it be *Real* or *Imagi-*
nary, It seems so *certain* to that Man, and
 must needs Influence *Him* to that degree,
 that he cannot vary from it, upon any *Te-*
stimony whatsoever, until he be first Con-
 vinc'd of the Reason or Cause of his *Mi-*
stake.

§ 21. But *Opinion* does not so, even when
 it amounts to the highest degree of *Probabi-*
lity, which may be called *Moral Certainty*,
 for still it is but *Morally* so, and not demon-

stratively so, for *Opinion* is but *Perswasion* upon *Probability*, which may possibly be otherwise, and therefore *Opinion* must in its own Nature be *Doubtful* and *Uncertain*, since it is possible to be false in the Judgment of that very Man whose *Opinion* it is, whereas in cases of *Knowledge* (or suppos'd so) even tho' the matter were mistaken, yet until the Mistake is perceived, it is utterly *Impossible* in that Man's Judgment, but that his Supposition must be True.

§ 22. And as *Knowledge* arises from the Certain, so *Opinion* arises from the Probable, Agreement or Disagreement which the *Mind* (by the help of Intermediate Ideas) perceives to be, between the *Nouns* and *Verb* in a Proposition, as in these, *Alexander* was King, *Bucephalus* was King, the *Mind* being instructed by Intermediate Ideas in the Nature of *Men*, *Horses*, and *Kings*, easily perceives, That the *Man* might be a *King*, but the *Horse* could not, and therefore is certain and *Knows* that *Bucephalus* was not *King*, but may be of *Opinion* that *Alexander* was *King*, if it has any Reasonable Proof thereof.

§ 23. And thus *Opinion* may receive strength and firmness according to the Importance of the Proof, and when founded on Notions generally received; as, *That the World is round*, or the like, or on Things or Facts

Facts universally allow'd, as that there was such a Person as *St. Patrick*, or that there were such Cities as *Troy* and *Numantia*, or the like, of which the *Mind* is very confident, the Perswasion will be so strong, that it may by some be mistaken for *Knowledge*, who have no present doubt of the matter, but still in the Nature of the evidence, it is Uncertain, and may prove a *Vulgar Error*, for ought they know, and since they own, that it is possible to be otherwise, their Sentiment tho' never so strong, is not *Knowledge* but *Opinion*.

§ 24. As for *Faith*, It is *An Assent of the Mind given upon Testimony*, so that if the Belief be founded on *Human Testimony*, It is called *Human Faith*, and if upon the Testimony of the *Holy Ghost*, then it is called *Divine Faith*, The former is of the Nature of *Opinion* (whereof in truth it is a *Species*) *Doubtful* and *Uncertain*, The later is of the nature of *Knowledge*, *Certain* and *Infallible*.

§ 25. From what has been said it will follow, That the Object of *Reason* must necessarily be something Intelligible, and that is then understood by that Person ; for if the Words of a Proposition do not Represent Ideas, the *Mind* has nothing to Debate or Judge upon, so that a Proposition consisting of Terms not understood by the Party, is like *sounding Brass*, and a *tinkling Cymbal*.

bal, and of no use at all to him, for in that Case the *Mind* has no Object either for its Assent or Dissent.

§ 26. And this seems to me always *True*, but may lead us into *Error*, unless we carefully distinguish between Propositions that are *explicitly*, that is, clearly and distinctly to be believ'd (for they cannot be examin'd nor believ'd farther, or otherwise than they are Understood) and Propositions received upon Testimony, which require only an *Implicit* or *General* Belief, viz. An Allowance or Assent that they are True, for in that Case, the Thing to be examin'd and explicitly believ'd, is only the *Veracity* of the Testifier, as shall be shewn hereafter.

§ 27. Now in matters of *Knowledge*, it is beyond Controversy, that the *Words* of the Proposition must be Understood by the Party, so as to give Ideas of the *Things*, else there cannot be any *Perception*, or any *Certainty*, but if the *Ideas* are Apprehended, and the *Mind* Convinc'd by either of the aforesaid ways, mentioned Pag. 83. It is not possible to alter the *Judgment* of that *Person*, by all the *Authority* or *Testimony* in the World, without first rectifying the *Motives* of his Sentiment, and discovering the *Causes* of his Mistake, and the reason is, because he is as sure of his *Conclusion*, as he can be of any *Medium* that can be made use of to Convince Him.

§ 28.

§ 28. For Example, If the Figures 3 and 2 were laid before a Person of dim Sight, who should take them for 2 and 2, it cannot be suppos'd, that whilst he lies under that mistake, all the *Testimony* and *Authority* in the World could perswade him, that those two Figures made *five*; But if his mistake were discovered, and he were appriz'd that those two Figures were 3 and 2, his assent would instantly follow, and he would then *Know*, that those two Figures made the Number propos'd.

§ 29. In like manner, If a *Lyon* and a *Horse* were shewn to any Man that could distinguish the *Species*, or had seen the like before, all the World could never convince that Man, that the one was an *Elephant* and the other a *Bear*, for the Perception of the *Mind* by the outward Senses (being perfect) is as certain to that Person, as any Mathematical Demonstration can be, and if the *Senses* were Imperfect, there is no way of convincing the Party, but by the *more perfect Senses of others*, so that the *Senses of all Mankind* must remain the most convincing *Evidence*, and afford the *greatest certainty*, that *Human Nature* is capable of, (without *Divine Inspiration*) and therefore cannot be contradicted, or diminish'd, by any other *Testimony* or *Authority* in the *World*. For if the *Senses* could be deceiv'd, yet

there is nothing more *perfect* or more *certain* among Men, that could Rectify the mistake.

§ 30. So that no Proof ought to be admitted against the Evidence of the *Outward Senses*, because there can be none of greater Weight or Perspicuity than Themselves, for to what Purpose should One endeavour to prove, That an *Eagle* is a *Sparrow*, or that a *Wafer* two Inches round is a *Man* six Foot high, or that a *Man* could put his *Body* into his *Mouth*, and eat *himself*, when all Men are as sure already of the *Untruth* of these Propositions, as They can be of any thing produced to Justify them, nor would *Miracles* alter the Case, for that were, to prove by something that One *does see*, that what he *does see*, He *does not see*.

§ 31. In short, They who would destroy the *Certainty* of the *Senses*, must of Necessity destroy the *Certainty* of the *Christian Religion*, if their Reasons were solid; for as our Blessed Saviour did Appeal to the *Outward Senses*, so it is from the Testimony of the *Outward Senses*, that We are Inform'd and Perswaded, That there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, That he did *Miracles*, That he was *Crucified*, and That he *Arose from the Dead*.

§ 32. For

§ 32. For, if the *Senses* cannot yield Us *Certainty*, We can be sure of nothing, tho' prov'd by the most clear and visible *Demonstrations* in the World, but are expos'd to inevitable and perpetual *Delusions*; How can we Confute the blaspheming *Gnosticks*, who Represented *Christ* as a meer *Phantom* and Apparition, as One, who was neither *really born*, nor *truly suffered*; but by the *Outward Senses* of those *Holy Men*, who gave *publick Testimony* of what They *saw* and *knew* in that matter; but We have no Reason to Trust *Their Senses* if we can't Trust *Our Own*, being equally perfect as *Theirs*, neither have we reason to Trust *Their Senses* or *Our Own*, unless *Substances* can be distinguish'd by outward *Accidents*, as every Day's Experience Convinces Us They may.

§ 33. 'Tis weakly Objected against this *Certainty* of the *Senses*, That *Angels* have appear'd as *Men*, for either They were Pure and Real *Spirits*, and then by following our Saviour's Advice, *Luke 24. 39. to handle and see*, it would soon be perceiv'd, whether They had *flesh and bones* or not, so that upon Nice examination, by several Persons in their perfect *Senses*, They would easily be discovered not to be *Men*, But if these holy Messengers of God could Assume *Bodies* of humane shape and figure, such

such as would abide strict examination, whatever their *Inward Qualities* might be, They would in *Outward Appearance* (which is all the *Senses* pretend to Judge) be Really *Men* as to Us, and we should be more sure of it, than of any *Humane Testimony* to the contrary.

§ 34. And so we come to the second Branch of our Division, which is *Opinion*, and here again it is Necessary, that the Words be understood, or taken in some Sense or other, so as to raise *Ideas* in the *Mind*, which it may compare with Intermediate *Ideas*, else how can it any way determine, whether the Proposition be *True* or *False*, Probable or Improbable, or give any Assent or Dissent, unless it understands *to what*, for in all cases, where the Proposition is to be *explicitly* and distinctly consented to, The *Assent* must follow *Perception*, and in a degree proportionable to what the *Evidence* seems, I say *seems*, for *Appearance*, whilst it continues, has the same effect on the *Mind*, as if it were *Real*, and *He*, who Reasons weakly, and Judges wrong, can no more help *believing as he Thinks*, than *He* who Judges right, tho' probably, he may be more easily perswaded to *change* his Opinion, but until he be undeceiv'd by *Argument*, or by *Testimony* convinc'd of his Mistake, His
Sen-

Sentiment cannot be alter'd, by all the force and violence in the World.

§ 35. But forasmuch as *Perception* admits of degrees, and in matters of *Opinion* is doubtful, staggering, and uncertain, it follows, that One's *Opinion* may be alter'd by *Argument* or *Testimony*, and if by *Argument*, It seems necessary to shew the Error of the former Sentiment, and to refute the *Motives* to it, or shew, That the *Conclusion* was not Consequent to those *Motives*, or had not necessary Connexion with them, but if the *Opinion* be to be changed on *Testimony*, it is not necessary, to Refute either the *premises*, or the *consequence*, because the *Mind* not being fix'd to a degree of *certainty*, cannot adhere to its Notion, as in cases of *Knowledge*, but is more light and fluttering, and more easily weigh'd down and Convinc'd, by any *Testimony* which it esteems sufficient.

§ 36. For Example, If One were of Opinion That the Sea could not Ebb and Flow, as thinking, that *Water* being a fluid Body, would always slide downward with the Declivity, and that therefore it were very unlikely, that it should Run to and fro the same way, yet forasmuch as this *Opinion* cannot be fix'd in the *Mind* with any *Certainty*, as well because of our Imperfect Notions of the *Nature* of things, as our
Total

Total Ignorance, *how far its Natural Course might be alter'd, and by what, that Person, without speaking one word to him of the Philosophy of the matter, or any way answering his Objections, would Immediately be convinc'd, by the Testimony of two or three Credible Persons, who had often seen the Flux and Reflux of the Ocean, That the Sea does ebb and flow.*

§ 37. And so We come to the Third branch of our Division, which is *Faith*, which shall be more at large explain'd in its proper place (*Chap. 12. of Faith*) but at present, it is necessary to Observe, That *Faith* is sometimes taken for *Hope*, or our *Trust in God*, and then, The *Confidence* may exceed The *Evidence*, as it often does in *Impenitent Sinners*, who vainly *Hope* for *Salvation* without *Repentance*, but when *Faith* is taken for *An Assent to a Proposition*, It is utterly Impossible, that it can be stronger, than That Person *thinks* the *Testimony* to be, upon which it is founded; for as no *Building* can possibly be stronger than the *Foundation*, so neither can any *Assent* be stronger than the *Motive* that produces it.

§ 38. And this *Faith* or *Assent* is always to be Denominated from the *Testimony*, so that (as hath been said) It is *Humane Faith* when it is founded upon *Humane Testimony*,
and

and *Divine Faith* when it is founded upon the *Revelation of God*, for that is *His Testimony*, and is as *Infallibly True*, as *God is True*.

§ 39. And this may lead Us to Inquire, in what Sense *Faith* (as it is an Assent to a Proposition) may be said to be *Divine*, which seems the main *Hinge* on which *Po-pery* turns, for the Papists, Requiring *Faith* strictly and properly *Divine*, do thereby Introduce the Necessity of an *Infallible Church*; for if *Divine Faith* Requires *Divine Testimony*, *Infallibly* appearing to Men, and if the *Scriptures* cannot give Us such *Evidence*, as well because They cannot *Testify of Themselves*, as because Their *Testimony* consists in the *Sense*, and not in the *Letter*, it follows, That there will be need of an *Infallible Witness* of the *Canon of Scripture*, and an *Infallible Interpreter* of the *meaning* of it, and so an *Infallible Church* absolutely Necessary, to Render our *Faith* properly and strictly *Divine*.

§ 40. But sure, They argue *Sophistically* who Reason after this manner, for the Question is not, *What Truth is Infallible*, for all Truth is so, & *Veritas a Quocunq; est, a Deo est*; but the Question is, *Whether the Proposition We are to believe does Infallibly appear to Us to be True*; and 'tis Trifling to say, That an *Infallible Church* can give Us that Assurance

Affurance, because there will still be wanting an *Infallible Testimony*, That *The Church is Infallible*.

§ 41. 'Tis plain then, That *Faith* must be Denominated from the *Ultimate Testimony*, or the *lowest Foundation* of it ; If a Person of Reputation Reports a Fact, of *his own Knowledge*, it will readily gain Belief, but if he Reports it, as *hearsay* from another, It can have no more Credit in the World, than that other Person has with the World.

§ 42. And it seems, That *Experience* may Convince Us, That no Man (without Inspiration) can be *Infallibly sure* of any Point of *Reveal'd Religion*, for if any such *Certainty* were to be had in this World, all Men would, and Necessarily must, submit to it, as They do to Mathematical Demonstrations, and would be All of *the same Opinion* therein, but on the contrary, Men of Great Piety and Learning, differ in Points of great Importance, and are *equally Confident* of Their Respective Tenents, Nay some Men are so Wicked, as to deny all *Reveal'd Religion*, and the very being of God, which is nevertheless much easier to be prov'd, than *the Infallibility of the Church*.

§ 43. Since then, no Man can be *Infallibly sure*, That an *Infallible Interpreter* is appointed for him, He ought with the best helps

helps he can get, to Interpret for himself, as well as he can, and tho' all he can do, will be too little, to make him *Infallibly sure* of his Interpretation, yet it may be sufficient to satisfy him, *That it is True*, and to Create in him a firm Belief, and even a *Moral Certainty* that it is so.

§ 44. And this *Moral Certainty* must of Necessity be a sufficient Ground for *saving Faith*, because it is all that is possible to be had, without *Inspiration*, And tho' One Man believes upon the Credit of *Miracles*, seen by himself, or credibly Reported by Others, and Another believes upon the Testimony of Antiquity, *Fathers, Churches, and Councils*, yet neither of Them is *Infallibly sure*, nor can justly pretend higher than a *Moral Certainty*, and even in that, are sometimes mistaken, since They often differ in Opinion, upon the *same Evidence*.

§ 45. So that it seems to me, That they are Injurious to the *Christian Religion*, who seemingly to honour it, Aver any thing of it that is *not True*, or pretend to greater *Certainty* of its Evidence, than the Nature of the Thing will bear ; for tho' the Articles of our Faith are *Infallibly True*, yet it would be downright Madness in any Man to say, That he is *Infallibly sure* in what Sense they are so.

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§ 46. How then can Our Faith be said to be properly and strictly *Divine*, since there is no *Divine Testimony* extant to Us, What Scriptures or Traditions are *the Word of God*, or his *Revelation*, or what is the True Sense and meaning of Them, The Holy Bible is Receiv'd by Us, upon *Humane Testimony* and *Humane Reasons*, so that The Canon of Scripture is but matter of *Humane Faith* or Opinion, And very Pious Men, and even whole Churches, have in several Ages Debated and Disputed about it, The Papists did for a long Time Reject the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, as Others did some other Books of the Scripture, The *Apocalypse* is Omitted in the famous Canon of *Laodicea*, and Protestants Reject the *Apocrypha* to this Day, And 'tis no Answer to say, That The Prophets and Apostles were *Inspir'd*, for it is by *Humane Testimony*, that We are Inform'd, That there were such Men in the World, or that They wrote the Books Ascrib'd to Them.

§ 47. It follows, That no Man (without *Divine Inspiration*) has more than a *Moral Certainty* what Books are *The Word of God*, and that is sufficient, And that being once admitted, That the Holy Scriptures are *the Word of God*, and written by *Inspiration of the Holy-Ghost*, We become sure, That every thing in them is True, because

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God is *Infinitely True*, and so Our *Faith* may be, and often is stiled *Divine Faith*, because it is founded upon, and Resolv'd into, *The Word of God*, so-acknowledg'd by the Generality of *Christians*, and so appearing to me, by Evidence which produces a *Moral Certainty* of its being so, and which I have mention'd at large (in my 10th Chap. of *the Scriptures*.) But this *Faith* is not properly and strictly *Divine*, because whether We Receive the *Holy Scriptures*, upon the Testimony of *Fathers, Councils, or Churches*, or other reasonable Arguments and Inducements, yet all these means of Information are *Humane*, and therefore I suppose, the Assent founded upon them must be so too.

§ 48. And the like may be said of the different Interpretations of Scripture, They are but matter of Opinion, and do alter and change, according to Mens Learning, Study, Information, and Diligence: And if any particular Text or Proposition is to be examined, in order to be *explicitly*, clearly, and distinctly believ'd, The Words and Terms, as there applied, are necessarily to be Understood, that Ideas may be rais'd in the Mind, and by comparing Them with other Ideas, the Mind may give its Judgment, whether the Proposition be True or False, in the Sense and Terms propos'd, but in no case, can it come in Question amongst

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Christians (who own the *holy Scriptures* to be *The Word of God*) Whether any One Text be *True* or *False* generally, because, it is as certain, as this self-evident Principle, *That God is True*, That every Word written by the *Inspiration of God* is *True*, in its proper Sense and Signification, and therefore, It is not Necessary in this General case, That the Words of the Text be understood, because Men do not Assent to it, upon any *Ideas* rais'd in the *Mind* by that Text or Proposition, but solely upon the *Testimony* and *Veracity* of the Author.

§ 49. If a *Person of Credit*, were discoursing in a strange Language, and should affirm some things which his Adversary should think were *false*, his *Friend* would (upon the Reputation of the Man) vouch for his *Veracity*, and without understanding the Language, or what was particularly said, he might assert his Friend's Integrity to such a degree, as would *convince* the Adversary, and *alter* his Opinion; so if a Man born *Blind* had a Friend of experienced *Honesty*, who should tell him, That the best *Black* was first dy'd *Blue*, he would undoubtedly believe him, tho' he did not understand either *Black* or *Blue*, And so We believe the *Scriptures*, and particularly the *Revelations*, to be *entirely True*, without pretending to understand every Sentence

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or Expression in them, and so We all believe *Christ's Descent into Hell*, without agreeing (much less expressly knowing) what is meant by the Words.

§ 50. But it may be Objected, That since *Scripture* is Received upon *Humane Arguments and Testimony*, will not the Credit of it be shaken, if there be manifest *Contradictions* in it, either by the Repugnancy of Terms to one another, as *One and Three*, or to our fix'd Notions, which have possess'd the *Mind* already to a degree of Certainty, as *That Spirits have no Hands*, and yet we find Mention made in *Scripture* of *The Right-hand of God*.

§ 51. To which I answer, That the *Gospel* being a *Revelation of Mysteries*, for which Men have neither adequate *Word* nor *Thought*, must of Necessity be couch'd in Terms of *Analogy* and *Similitude*, that might give Us *some sort of Idea*, which tho' *Imperfect*, and not equal to the *sublime Nature* of the Things Themselves, yet is most suitable to our *Capacities*, and sufficient to all the Purposes of our *Duty*, whether of *Reverence* or *Obedience*; Thus *A State of Power and Glory* is represented by the *Right-hand*, and *Divine Filiation*, by eternal *Generation*; so that the Words are not to be taken according to common Acceptation, Nor can we fully comprehend the

Mysterious Sense intended by Them, in short, We do not perfectly understand either the *Words* (as applied) or the *Things*, nor is it Necessary We should, and where we have not a full and Comprehensive Notion of the *Things*, we cannot pretend to find Contradiction in the *Terms*, by which they are signified.

§ 52. For Example, The Words *Eternal Generation*; are according to common Acceptation as contradictory, and as difficult for the Wit of Man to Couple together, as any two Words in the *English* Language, because *Generation* is an Act of Time, and *Eternal* is prior to all Time, and to all Worlds; But when it is consider'd, that *Divine Generation* is no more like *Humane Generation*, than God's *Right-hand* is like our *Right-hand*, and that *Divine Generation* cannot be an Act of Time, because, *every thing in God is Eternal*, and because the *Son of God is also God*, and consequently is *Eternal*, so that the Word *Generation* seems to be Us'd (according to *Humane* Phrase) as Correlative to *Filiation* or *Sonship*, but when the Word *Divine* is added to it, It imports something beyond *Humane Capacity*, so that no Man can fully Comprehend the Nature of it, much less find any *Contradiction* in it, nor indeed can at all Judge, *whether it be True or Untrue*,
but

but ought entirely to be Guided by the *Testimony of God* in the *holy Scriptures* concerning it, and ought to believe, as it is there express'd, since He cannot possibly know the contrary.

§ 53. But what need we seek for Instances in *Complex terms*, to puzzle *Human Understanding*, since the single word *Eternal* is beyond our *Comprehension*, for tho' We may have such a Notion of it, as serves to all the Purposes of *Religion*, and may describe it, *To have neither Beginning nor End*, yet no *finite Mind* can pretend to form a perfect *Idea* of that *Infinite Duration*, or truly to *Comprehend*, *what it is*, Nor does he who conceives as many *Ages* as *Arithmetick* can Number, come any nearer to it, than he that thinks but of a *Minute*, so that it seems to *Imply a Contradiction*, since it is *All Time*, and yet *No Time*, for It is neither *Increas'd* by Addition, nor *Diminish'd* by Substraction, It was the same Ten Thousand Years ago, that it will be Ten Thousand Years hence, and neither more nor less, longer or shorter, at those different Periods; In short, *A thousand Years are in the Sight of the Eternal but as one Day*, which tho' above our Capacity to *Conceive*, is nevertheless very believable to be *true*, and we have a *Moral Certainty* that it is so, since an *Infinite Progress* in Na-

tural Causes is absurd and *Impossible*, so that of Necessity, there must be some *Eternal*, And sure it is more Reasonable to believe *that God is Eternal*, than that *Matter*, or *Motion*, or *the World* are so.

§ 54. I say therefore, that *seeming Contradictions* in things *above our Capacity*, is no reason to disbelieve them, if the *Testimony* be Authentick, because it is not possible for Us to *Know* that the *seeming Contradiction* is a *Real One*, on the contrary, It is more likely, that the false Appearance arises from our *Incapacity* and Imperfection, and not from the Nature of the Thing, and therefore, as the *seeming Crookedness* of a Stick in the Water, does not in the least shock our Belief, that the *Stick* is nevertheless *strait*, or the seeming greenness of an Object We look on through green Spectacles, does not hinder our believing, that the Thing is really of another Colour, because We are sensible, that both these false Appearances are occasion'd by the Nature of the *Medium*, so in the other Case (when the *Testimony* is good) We ought to think, That the Contrary Appearance proceeds from our *Want of Capacity*, and the *Imperfection* of our *Faculties* to Comprehend them at all, much less to understand them aright.

§ 55. It

§ 55. It follows that in *Mysteries*, and Incomprehensible Matters above our Capacity, where we cannot fully understand the Terms as then applied, nor the things signified by them, A General and *Implicit Faith* is sufficient, for to what purpose should *Men* examine or enquire farther, since it is Impossible to *believe* any Proposition *explicitly*, farther, or otherwise, than it is *understood*, and it is as Impossible to *Understand* any thing that is *above Human Capacity*, This then seems to be our Duty, that Confiding in the veracity of God, We believe all that *He* has said to be *True* in the Sence *He* intended it, without enquiring farther into that Sence, than *He* has been pleased to *Reveal* it, or has given Us Opportunity to discover.

§ 56. And therefore my *Reason* at least is satisfied, in believing upon the Testimony of Scripture, That *there are the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and that these Three are One*, and that *the Word is God*, even God *over all blessed for ever more*, without puzzling my self with fruitless Enquiries into Incomprehensible Matters, or presuming to dive into the Inscrutable Secrets of the *Trinity*, I also believe, That *Christ had Glory with the Father before the World was*, And that *God loved him before the Foundation of the World*, without pretending to Understand

Joh. i. 21.

the Nature of *Divine Generation*, and I firmly believe, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, without afflicting my self, *with what Bodies we shall Rise*, and it seems to me, that the Word *Incomprehensible* is a Reproach to them, who endeavour to Unfold *Divine Secrets*, farther than God has been pleased to *Reveal* them, for it is difficult to excuse any Man from *Arrogance*, who pretends to *explain* that to another, which he owns He does not *Understand* himself.

§ 57. And this Answer will suffice to all the *seeming Contradictions in Scripture*, viz. That they are not *Real* ones, but the *Words* and the *Things* are not rightly understood, and if it be replied, that *seeming* whilst it continues has the same Influence with *Reality*, I answer, that it is so, where the *Words* and the Nature of the *Things* are *fully understood*, and the Proposition is to be *explicitly* and distinctly believed, but it is not so, where the matter is *above our Capacity*, and where the Proposition is to be *Generally* and *Implicitly* assented unto, upon the Credit of the *Testimony*, for there nothing is in debate, but *The Veracity of the Witness*.

§ 58. And allowing that *Perception* is the *Criterion* to distinguish *Truth* from *Falshood*, *Probable* from *Improbable*, and how *Imperfect* soever it may be in Men, yet they have no other Means to Judge by, and that

that whatever the *Mind* conceives to be contradictory (right or wrong) it can never believe to be *True*, for that were to *Affirm* and *Deny* the same *Thing* at the same *Time*, yet it will not alter the *Case*, for where the *Words* as applied, and the *Nature* of the *Things* are Imperfectly Apprehended, or not at all Understood; The *Perception* will be likewise Imperfect, or rather there will be no perception at all, and consequently no contradiction either *Real* or *Imaginary*.

§ 59. So that it seems plain, that in *Things* above *Human Capacity*, where the *Mind* has no fixed *Notion* or *Perception*, any more than a *Man* born blind has of *Colours*, there can be no difficulty in believing them, upon *Good Testimony*, for the *Mind* which does not (a) *Understand* Them, cannot contradict what is said of Them, and therefore in this *Case*, The *Reason* or rather *Capacity* of *Men* must Vail to *Faith*, and so it must in all *Cases*, where our *Ignorance* or Imperfect *Notions* of the *Nature* of *Things*, comes in competition with the *Omnipotence* of *God*, who made that very *Nature*, and has full *Power* over it, to order it as he pleases, so that all that *Reason* has to do in these and the like *Cases*, is only to examine the *Testimony*, and not to admit any proof, but what it conceives sufficient.

(a) See
2 Ed. c. 4.

§ 60. But

§ 60. But why should Men pretend to speak the *Words of God*, plainer than God himself has done, ought we not rather to Acquiesce in *God's own Words* in Scripture and believe in the same *Latitude* it is there expressed, without exposing *Mysteries* that are to be believed with Reverence, to the Casualties of Speech, 'Tis certain, that the first Heresies arose, from too *Nice* and *Critical* Inquiries, into the Reason, Nature, and Philosophy, of *Divine Person, Will, and Union*, which none of them did well understand, and therefore, the Factions grew as Numerous, as the different Acceptations of those Words, and the several Notions concerning Them, and in all Ages, whilst *Conceited Men* attempt to express, what they do not understand, there will be *Error* and *Contention*, for they who know least, will be the *greatest Pretenders*, and they through *Ignorance* will oftentimes blunder, and others who know something more than they, will not fail perpetually to expose them in those *Notions*, which are manifestly *Ridiculous* to all Men.

§ 61. What is then to be done, Must we believe *contrary to our Reason*? No; for 'tis manifestly absurd, and altogether *Impossible* that we should, for as hath been said, Faith is but *Reason upon Testimony*, and therefore if it contradicts *Reason* as taken for *Knowledge*,

edge, it can never be embrac'd, because it would be demonstratively *false*, and even tho' the *Knowledge* were Imperfect, and the *Mind* by mistake were fix'd to a Degree of *certainty*, (as in cases of *Knowledge*) such a person can never be convinc'd, nor his *Judgment* altered, by any *Testimony* whatsoever, without discovering his *Error* to him, and Rectifying his mistake, but when that is done, and he is convinc'd, His *Reason* (that is his *Judgment*) is chang'd, and agrees with the Proposition, and what he thought *Knowledge* of one thing, is Turn'd to *Faith* of the contrary, and then his *belief* is not contrary to his *Reason*, but with

§ 62. In like manner, if *Reason* be taken for *Opinion*, and that *Opinion* be alter'd by argument, or by *Testimony*, as it may be, as soon as it is chang'd, *Reason* turns to that *Opinion*, and concurs with the *belief*, or rather, the *same Thing* with it, so that in this case also, No Man believes contrary to his *Reason*, but according to it.

§ 63. But in *Mysteries*, and *Propositions*, where the *Nature* of the Thing, or the *Terms* made use of to Represent it, are not fully Understood, The *Mind* cannot make any clear and express *Determination* at all, and therefore a Man does not act against his *Reason*, but with the highest *Reason*, in believing

believing them, upon *Sufficient Testimony*, to be True.

§ 64. And if it be Objected, That unless One understands the *Things*, and the *Terms*, he believes *he knows not what*, It is not True, for the thing that he believes, is *The Veracity of God*, and in consequence thereof, He believes all that *God* has said, tho' he does not understand the full Scope of the *Words*; but it is *True*, as to particular Propositions which he *Implicitly* believes upon *Divine Authority*, He cannot *explicitly* know what he believes, without understanding the *Terms*, nor farther than he does Understand Them, which shews, That there is no necessity of *explicitly* Believing any *Mysterious Proposition* farther, or in other *Terms*, than *God* has been pleas'd to Reveal it, and make it *Intelligible* to that Party: and the plain Reason of it is, That it is absolutely *Impossible* to be done.

§ 65. But to return to the *Word of God*, since it is *Impossible*, that it should be in any Thing *False*, It is certainly a necessary Duty incumbent on all *Christians*, to Interpret every thing in *Scripture*, in a Sense wherein it is *True*, and therefore when our *blessed Saviour* says, That he is a *Vine*, and a *Door*, and of Bread, *This is my Body*, forasmuch as we *Know*, that those Expressions are *litterally false*, and that *without a Parable*
spake

make he not unto them, We ought certainly to interpret those Expressions (a) figuratively, and in a Sense wherein they are true.

§ 66. Upon the whole matter, I conclude, That the Reason or Judgment of Men which amounts to Science or Knowledge (or is thought so by Them) can never be changed, even by the Testimony of Scripture, unless the Mind be first Undeceived and convinc'd of its mistake, because how express soever Scripture may be in the point, the Mind, whilst prejudic'd by suppos'd demonstration, will always Interpret suitably to its own Notion, whereof it is so Certain, That it must Necessarily, rather deny the Authority of the Text, than Interpret in any other Sense than what is conformable to its supposed Knowledge, for as demonstrative Reason can't deceive, so what one thinks so, will have the same Influence on that Person, whilst that Notion continues, if it were Real; But in matters of Opinion, Speculation and Fancy, The Mind not being Certain and fix'd, may (without being convinc'd of its Mistake by Argument) change its Sentiment, upon any Testimony,

(a) St. Aug. de doctrina Christiana, lib. 3. cap. 16. figura ergo est.

whose *Veracity* appears more *probable* to it than the Notion it had entertain'd.

§ 67. Upon these distinctions, and what has been already said (*Cap. 3.*) The difference between believing the Articles of the *Trinity*, and of *Transubstantiation*, will evidently appear, for the Difficulties objected against the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, are not *Real* but *Imaginary*: They are purely *Metaphysical*; and but matters of *Opinion* about the *Divine Nature*, which no Man can perfectly comprehend, and the *Terms* (as applied) are so far from being *fully understood* that all agree, That they are not adequate to the Thing, so that no Man can find That there is any *Contradiction* in Them without *knowing* the full Import of the Words, and the *Infinite Nature* of God which since no Man does, there is no Impediment, why we may not believe what the *Holy Scriptures* have testified of the *Trinity*; But the *Impossibilities* of *Transubstantiation* are Manifest, and Substantial, They are obvious to all our *Senses*, they are *Practically* and *Demonstratively evident*, They are *contradictory* to our most perfect *Perceptions*; The Words, *Bread, Wine, Body*, &c. applied to that Sacrament, are fully understood, and the *Transubstantiation* of them whilst the *Accidents* remain, is manifestly contrary to our *Knowledge*, and therefore

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to it, more, all those, who pretend to believe
transubstantiation, ought seriously to Consi-
der, whether it be possible to be done, since
no Man can Think that to be True, which he
knows to be False.

§ 68. And so having found, That Reason
is the Principal and Final Act of the Under-
standing, which is the Faculty I must Judge
with, I now proceed to Enquire, for A
Rule of Faith to Judge by.

C H A P.

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C H A P. VII.

Of the Rule of FAITH.

IT seems to Me strange, That there should be any Dispute, about the *Rule of Faith*, because there can be no *Rule of Faith*; but *Divine Revelation*: So that, *The Will of GOD*, howsoever convey'd to Us, is *The Rule of Faith*.

§ 2. And since the *Canonical Scriptures* are allow'd by all Christians to be *the Word of GOD*, and of *Divine Revelation*: It must likewise be allow'd by *Them*, that the *Holy Scriptures*, for so much as they contain, are undoubtedly *The Rule of Faith*.

§ 3. So that the only Question is, Whether the *Scripture* is *Plain and Compleat*? or if not, Whether the Difficulties can be *Infalibly* Explained, or the defect *Infalibly* supply'd, by *Oral Tradition*, or the present *Church*?

§ 4. And it can't be deny'd, but that if we cou'd have equal Assurance from *Oral Tradition*, That *Christ* or his Inspired *Apostles* Taught any Doctrine *verbally*, that is not mention'd in *Scripture*, as we have;
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that *He* and *They* did Teach the Doctrines contained in the *Bible*, we should be as much Oblig'd to *believe* and *Obey*, the one, as the other.

§ 5. Or if the *present Church* be Inspir'd by *God*, as the *Apostles* were ; If the *Holy Ghost* does in an extraordinary manner descend upon the Head and Members of it, as it did on the *Apostles* ; if the *present Church* has the Gifts of *Tongues*, and of *Miracles*, to evidence its Doctrine, as from *God*, as the *Primitive Church* had, or cou'd any way make appear, That it is *Infallible*, there is no doubt, but that we should be obliged to *believe* and *Obey Infallibility* wherever we found it ; and in that case, to have equal Regard to the *Present* and the *Primitive Churches*.

§ 6. But it will appear, That *Oral Tradition* cannot give us any such *Infallible Assurance*, as well, because in its own Nature, it is very *Obscure* and *Uncertain*, and lyable to great *Mistakes*, and is in truth a much better evidence of *Facts* and *Practice*, than it can be of *Words* and *Doctrine* ; as, because, no *Tradition* can be of *Authority* that is not *Universal*, as to *Time*, *Place*, and *Persons*, and there is no such *Universal Tradition* in the World, in any Point of *Doctrine*, at least not in any Point in *Difference* ; Nor indeed can We be sure, That there

there is such an *Universal Tradition* in any point at all, since the *Christian Church* is extended to many Remote Countries, and perhaps to some not yet discovered to Us, so that their *Sentiments and Traditions*, in all Ages, are not known to Us, nor Ours to Them.

§ 7. And it is plain, That the *present Church* is not Inspir'd by GOD, *extraordinarily*, or in the manner Required, because some of its Members are so exceedingly *Wicked*, that no Body will say that They are Inspir'd by any *good Spirit*; and if the *Rest* were Inspir'd, yet that would not do, for it would only give *Infallibility* to themselves, and not to the *whole Church*: But there is no One Member of the *Church* dares pretend to *Divine and Infallible* Inspiration; and if he did, the want of *Tongues and Miracles* would soon discover the *Imposture*, and his Mistake, (as we find in the *Popes*) would soon Manifest him, not only to be *fallible* but *Erronious*.

§ 8. And therefore we must have Recourse to the *Holy Scriptures* for the Rule of our Faith: And indeed it is little less than Blasphemy to say, that They are Defective in any *Doctrine necessary to our Salvation*. For, 1st. It seems to charge the *Holy Ghost* with Omission or Neglect, in not transmitting all things necessary for our Salvation in *Writing*, since it is undoubtedly a more du-
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rable

rable and a more *certain* way of Instruction to after Times, than *Oral Tradition* can be.

2 Tim. 3. 15. *ture is able to make us Wise to Salvation;*
and the Apostle tells us, That he hath de-
A&S 20. 27. *clared unto us all the Council of GOD.* 3ly.

Because We are Prohibited to *add to or diminish from the Word of God*, Deut. 4. 2. and a Curse is denounced, Rev. 22. 18, 19. against *Those who add to or diminish from that Book*, which closes *The Cannon of Scripture*, and strongly Infers, *That the Bible contains a Compleat System. of Faith.*

§ 9. And indeed, since a *New Gospel* must not be preach'd, there seems no necessity of *New Inspiration*, and therefore all Pretenders to it are to be *suspected*, and the rather, because many of them have been detected of *Imposture*, as *Montanus, Mahomet, Mugleton, The late Prophets, &c.* besides the *Primitive Christians*, and the *Fathers* did strenuously assert *The Sufficiency of Scrip-*

Tertul. adv.
Hermog.
Vinc. Eyr.
Comonit.
c. 2.
l. 2. c. 47.
De Do&tr.
Christiana,
l. 2. c. 9.

ture; One says, *He adores the fulness of Scripture*, another, *That the Scripture is Compleat, and more than sufficient in every respect*, *Irenaeus* says, *that the Scriptures are perfect*, and *St. Augustine*, *that they Contain all that Pertains to Faith or Manners*, and *St Basil* is express in the Point, *It is* (says he) *a manifest falling away from the Faith*; and a fault of *Presumption*, either to *Reject any of those*

those

those things that are written, or to bring in, upon the head of them, any of those things that are not written, and surely it does import them who say, *The Scriptures are not sufficient*, to shew, That *Tradition* has discoverd to Us any Doctrine necessary to Salvation, that is not contained in the Bible.

§ 10. And as to the Explication of difficult Texts, the Question is not, whether *Oral Tradition* or the *Church* we are of, or the *Fathers*, or even Learned and *Wise Men* of the present Age, may not give us great help and assistance to come at the Right Understanding of *Scripture*, but whether they can do it *Infallibly*, and oblige others to their Sentiments upon pain of *Damnation*, and at the peril of *Our Souls* to receive *Their* determinations as the *Oracles of GOD*.

§ 11. *St. Augustine's* Opinion is very clear in the Matter, That the (a) *Authority* of the *Fathers* must be subjected to the *Word of GOD* in *Scripture*; and *The Internal evidence of Reason*; and that we ought to believe the Attestation of the *Canonical Scriptures* without Doubting, but for all other *Testimonies* we may or may not believe

(a) Nolo Autoritatem meam sequaris, ut ideo putes tibi aliquid necesse esse credere, quoniam a me dicitur, sed aut Scripturis Canonicis credas, si quæ nondum quam verum sit vides, aut interius demonstranti veritatem ut hoc plane videas, *Aug. Epist. 112. ad Paulinam.*

them, as (b) *We see cause* : So that he makes every Man for himself Judge of the Controversy, and the Scripture the proper Rule to Judge by, And St. Hierome plainly gives us the Reason for it ; because, says he, (c) *The Apostles could not Err, but all others might mistake.*

§ 12. But what need farther Argueing in so plain a Case ; for nothing can be a Rule of Faith but what is Perfect and Infallible, and nothing upon Earth is so but the Holy Scripture, and all other Authorities are finally Resolved into that. Hence it is, that the Scriptures are stiled Canonical, because they are the Canon or Rule of Faith ; and the Reason why the Papists decline the Scripture, or Impeach its sufficiency, and postpone it to the present Church is, because their Trent Articles have no solid Foundation in the Bible ; and because by making the Catholick Church the Rule of Faith, and arrogating that Title to the Church of Rome, They become Judges in their own Cause, and

(b) Aliis vero Testibus vel Testimoniis quibus aliquid credendum esse suadetur tibi Credere vel non credere liceat quantum meriti ea admonentem ad faciendam fidem vel habere, vel non habere perpenderit. *ibid.*

(c) Scio me aliter habere Apostolos, aliter Reliquos Tractatores, illos semper vera dicere, istos in quibusdam, ut homines aberrare. *Hierom. Tom. 3. Epist. ad Theophilum.*

then

then 'tis their fault, if they don't Judge for
Themselves.

§ 13. And tho' they *know*, that the *Scripture* would be of no Use, if the present *Church* were *Infallible*; and that the *Fathers* instead of Arguments against *Hereticks*, would always have resorted to the *Infallibility* and *Authority* of the *Church*, in all Controversies amongst Christians, if they had thought the *Church* to be furnish'd with those *Definitive Qualities*; yet the *Papists* do persist, in setting up *Oral Tradition*, and *The Church*, for our *Guides* in the *Faith*, And therefore we must more at large examine the *Infallibility* of *Oral Tradition*, and of the *present Church*.

C H A P. VIII.

Of TRADITION.

§ 1. **T***Radition* is deriv'd from the Verb *Trado*, which signifies to *Give*, or to *Deliver*; so that *Tradition* is an Account *Given*, or *Delivered*, of *Words* spoken, or *Things* done: And if the Account be by word of Mouth, it is called *Oral Tradition*, or *Speech*; and if it be by Writing, it is then called *written Tradition*, or *Scripture*.

§ 2. So that *Oral Tradition*, is no more but a *Verbal Report*, delivered by Men, from one Age to another, of *Doctrines* that were Taught, or *Things* that were done in their Times: And since many of those Men were *Wicked*, some of them *Simple*, and all of them (since the Apostles) *Fallible*, It is to be fear'd, That those *Reports*, may be like other *Reports*, sometimes *false*, sometimes *true*, but never *Infallible*; for *Oral Tradition* is something like *Fame*, which seldom loses in the Carrriage, but rather, as *Virgil* expresses it, *Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo*.

§ 3. Hence it is, That Those, who are not able to Justify their Religion by *Scripture*,

ture, being forc'd to Shelter themselves under *Oral Tradition*, and being sensible, That unless *Tradition* be *Infallible*, it can be no Rule of *Divine Faith*, and that it is far from being so in its own Nature, are necessitated to search for that *Quality* elsewhere, and at length to Derive, the supposed Infallibility of *Tradition*, from the Imaginary Infallibility of the *Church*.

§ 4. So that to undeceive Them, and to set this Matter in a true Light, it will be fit to distinguish, first between the *Testimony* of Tradition, and the *Authority* of it. 2dly. Between Traditions of *Doctrine*, and Traditions of *Practice*. And 3dly. Between *Oral* Traditions and *Written* ones.

§ 5. As to the first, The *Testimony* of *Tradition*, Ecclesiastical or Civil, may, or may not, according to Circumstances, be sufficient to induce *Moral Certainty*; and if it be delivered by many Persons of Credit, and not contradicted by any, and if the thing in it self be *probable*, there will be little reason to doubt it, as, That there was such a Person as *Henry the Eighth*, That *St. Paul* wrote his Epistles, and *Julius Caesar* his Commentaries: But if the Thing be in it self very *Improbable*, as the *Miracles* of *St. Patrick*, or contradicted by others, as the *History* of *Pope Joan*, then the Circumstances, the Proofs, and the Probabilities,

lities, of each *Tradition*, should be Examined and Consider'd, and according to the Discretion of the Party, he will adhere to which *Tradition* he thinks *best*, and may sometimes choose the *worst*; but if he should attain to a *Moral certainty*, yet that can amount but to a high degree of *Probability*, which is far short of *Infallibility*. So that some who have been most *confident*, have been afterwards *undeceived*, and being sensible of their *Mistake*, have become Morally certain of the *quite contrary* of what they were morally certain of before; which I suppose would be the case of that *Pope* (were he now living) who Condemn'd the *Bishop* of *Salzburg* of Heresie, for Asserting, *That there were Antipodes*, for he might now be Convinc'd to the highest degree of *Moral certainty*, *That there are so*.

§ 6. So that the *Testimony* of *Tradition*, as well because it is in its own Nature *Uncertain*, *Tam ficti praviq; tenax quam Nuncia veri*, as because at best it is but *Humane Testimony*, can be no *Infallible Rule* of *Divine Faith*, tho' it may, or may not, as it is Circumstanc'd, be a sufficient Motive of *Humane Faith*: And therefore the *Church of Rome* supplies its *Traditions* with the *Authority* of the *Catholick Church*, which they say is *Infallible* and *Divine*; and upon this vain Supposition, the *Council of Trent* decrees,

Pari Pie-
tatis af-
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Reveren-
tia susci-
pit ac ve-
neratur.

crées, That unwritten Traditions received from the Mouth of Christ, or His Apostles Inspired with the Holy-Ghost, and handed down to us, and preserved by continued Succession in the Catholick Church, shall be Received and Reverenced in the same manner with the Holy Scriptures. And Pope Pius IV. in his Trent Creed, Art. 13. stedfastly admits and embraces Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Traditions, and the rest of the Observances and Constitutions of the same Church : So that, The Papists suppose, that Their Traditions were Divinely Inspir'd by the Holy-Ghost, and Infallibly preserv'd by the same Spirit in the Catholick Church, and consequently are as Infallible as any other Word of GOD.

§ 7. And indeed, it must be allow'd, That the *Doctrines Preached* by Christ, or his *Inspired Apostles*, are equally *Divine* and *Infallible* with any thing they *Wrote* : But the Question is, whether we have *Equal Assurance*, of pretended *Traditions* to have proceeded from *Christ* or the *Apostles*, as we have, that *Scripture* did so, They say we have, because it is the *Infallibility* of the *Church* that can only *Assure* us of *either*, and therefore may equally *Assure* Us of *Both*; and so they make the *Authority* of *Tradition* to depend entirely upon the *Infallibility* of the *Catholick Church*, with which it must stand or fall.

§ 8. As

§ 8. As to the second, 'tis manifest, That there is great difference between *Facts* and *Opinions*, between *Doctrines* and *Practice*, as well in our Knowledge and Discovery of them, as in our Reports and *Traditions* concerning Them, for the *Custom*, Usage, and open Practice of the *Church*, is Obvious and *Apparent* to every body: But the *Opinions* of Men are more *secret*, and 'tis G O D alone (who searches the Heart) that can certainly Inform us of the *Sentiments* of Others, We may be certain of what we see Men *Doe*, but We cannot be certain of what they *Think*. We don't know the *Opinion* of any City, Town, or Village in our Neighbourhood, in matters of *Religion*; and perhaps no City or Town in the World is *Unanimous* in its Opinion concerning it: How then shall we know the Doctrine of the Universal Church, especially if *the whole Church* was never *Uniform* in all its Points, either of *Doctrine* or *Practice*, since the Apostles Days, as it seems it was not; for there were *Errors*, *Heresies*, and *Schisms* in the Church from its *Infancy*, and commonly each side pretended *Tradition*, which was so *various*, That *Celsus* accused the Christians of changing the Gospel every Day, and tho' that was *not true*, yet it shews, that there were *Divisions* and Differences from the very beginning:

How

How then can we, at this distance of Time, *Infallibly* discover the *Doctrine* of the *Universal Church* in all Ages? Surely it is Impossible to do it in any Points wherein they differ'd, and very difficult to do it in any Article not contained in their Common and Publick Creed. But if one then living could find out the *Doctrine* of the *Universal Church* in the primitive Times, yet the *verbal Report* of it from One to Another, through so many Ages since, is subject to so many Errors and Mistakes, that it is hard to believe, That the *Wisdom* of God should Appoint that Method for our Instruction, or that the *Wisdom* of Man, without knowledge of such Appointment, should depend upon it.

§ 9. As to the Third Distinction, which is between *Oral Tradition* and *Writing*, there can be no Dispute, but that *Scripture* is more surely and more easily preserved, than *Words* and verbal Expressions can be: And there is no Man but would prefer a *written Will* before a *nuncupative* one, and would rather have the Evidences of his Estate in *Writing* than by *Parol*; and surely the *Holy-Ghost* hath already determin'd this matter, by committing the Oracles of God to *Writing*, both in the *Old Testament* and in the *New*.

§ 10. Besides

§ 10. Besides, *Experience* may convince us, That *Oral Tradition* is not only *fallible*, but has frequently fail'd, since in most *Ages* and most *Countries*, the People have been miserably deluded by it; for it gives a Handle to *designing Men*, to Impose what they please on the *Ignorant*.

§ 11. When the long *Lives* of the *Patriarchs* rendred *Oral Tradition* more probable than it can be now, because it pass'd through fewer Hands, tho' *Adam* liv'd to see *Methusalem* 243 Years Old, and he, to see *Sem* 98 Years Old, who lived 502 Years afterwards; so that these Three filled the space of 2158 Years; and tho' they were frequently Aided by *Divine Revelation*, and had but One Article *explicitly* to believe, viz. *The Being of G O D*, yet even then, had *Oral Tradition* corrupted their Religion with *Error* and *Idolatry*: So that in the Life of *Sem G O D* was pleased (shall I say found it necessary) to make new Revelations to *Abraham*.

§ 12. In like manner, The *Jews*, tho' they had *Moses* and the *Prophets*, yet did they by their *Traditions* Transgress the *Commandments* of *G O D*, Matth. 15. 3. Mark 7. 7. and Rendred them of no Effect, Matth. 15. 6. Their *vain Conversation* (from which they were Redeemed) was received from the *Tradition* of their *Fathers*, 1 Pet. 1. 18. and that *Tradition*

dition led them to expect a *Messiah*, who should be a *Mighty Temporal Prince*, and was a cause of *their* Stubbornness and Infidelity, and of *his* Crucifixion.

§ 13. The *Turks* are another Instance of the Danger of Relying too much on *Oral Tradition*; for by their *Groundless Traditions*, they have deceived one another, and have Infected their whole Posterity, with the *Romantick Delusions of Mahometisme*, and *Imposture*.

§ 14. Nor did the *Primitive Christians* wholly escape the Delusion of *Forged Traditions*; *Papias* Bishop of *Hierapolis* deceiv'd them with a Story, *That Christ was to Reign a Thousand Years upon Earth*, which obtain'd so much Credit, that *St. Ireneus* pretends to give us the very Words of *Christ* for it: So that most of the *Fathers* (all the *Orthodox Fathers*, says *Justin Martyr*) were tainted with this *Millenary Heresie*, which is now Rejected (as a Forgery) even by the Church of *Rome*, but possibly may be Reviv'd again, by some fanciful Man or other.

§ 15. Nor has the Church of *Rome* escaped this Misfortune; on the contrary, she has been more abus'd and deluded by *Oral Tradition*, than any of her *Christian Neighbours*: Her *Infant Communion*, and *Apocriphal Canon of Scripture*, are Instances of

of her being Impos'd upon; her *Tradition* of the *Pope's Supremacy*, and the *Decretal Epistles* of the First Three Hundred Years, produc'd to support it, are now discover'd to be manifest *Forgeries*, and contrary to the Sense of *Pope Gregory the Great*, who thought the Title of *Universal Bishop* to be Antichristian. Their *Tradition*, that *St. Peter was twenty Five Years Bishop of Rome* is inconsistent with *Scripture*, and apparently *False*; their *Tradition* of the *Assumption* of the *Body of the Blessed Virgin*, to commemorate which they Consecrate a Holy Day, is nevertheless a palpable and groundless *Forgery*, and their *Tradition* of *Worshipping Images*, Vouch'd by the second Council of *Nice*, is manifestly *False*, unless they mean the *Tradition* mention'd *Wisd. 14. 16.* Thus in process of Time, an Ungodly Custom grown strong, was kept as a Law, and Graven Images were worshipped by the Commandments of Tyrants. From all which, and many more Instances that might be produc'd, It is plain, that the *Oral Tradition* of the *Church of Rome* is so far from *Infallible Authority*, that it will not pass for credible *Testimony*, except in Cases where concurrent *Circumstances* may give it some Reputation.

§ 16. The aforesaid *Distinctions* being premis'd, to prevent Confusion, I proceed

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to shew, 1st. That the *Tradition* of any *Particular Church* can never be *Infallible*, whose *Doctrines* were not always *Uniform*, Nor 2dly, can the *Universal* or *Catholick Church* be *Infallible* in any Article, if at any Time it was *Divided* in Opinion about it, Nor 3dly, can the *Oral Traditions* of any Church be *Infallible* if the very *Written Traditions* are Forged, Corrupt, or Untrue.

§ 17. As to the First, It is without Question, That wherever there is a *Change*, there is no *Infallibility*; and therefore the *Church of Rome* should not pretend to it, for She has not been constantly *Uniform* in all Points, either of *Doctrine* or *Practice*. Her very *Creed* has been alter'd; 1st, By the Addition of the Word *Catholick*; 2dly, By the Addition of the Article of *Christ's* * *Descent into Hell*; 3dly, By the Word *Filioque* Added to the *Constantinopolitan Creed*; And 4thly, By the Twelve *New Articles* Added by the Council of *Trent*; for none of these were in the *Ancient Roman Creed*, and some of them are not even *implicitly* comprehended in it. That *Church* has also varied from her *Primitive Usage*, in Prohibiting the Sacrament of the *Eucharist* to *Infants*, and *Marriage* to the *Clergy*, and the *Cup* to the *Layty*, for it was not so from the Beginning; and in a Word, The present

* Aquinas
2da. 2da.
pag. 5.

sent Church of Rome, (as Cassander confesses) has much Degenerated from the Purity and Splendor of that Ancient Church, in form of Doctrine, as well as in Ceremonies; and that even the Discipline of the Church is exceedingly changed: So that the Traditions of that Church cannot be Infallible, which hath admitted of so many Alterations.

§ 18. As to the Second, It seems to Me, that The Catholick Church hath often been divided upon Articles of *Doctrine* as well as *Forms of Practice*; and surely every Man will be of this Opinion, who considers, how often the *Fathers* differ'd from one another, and from the *Truth* in several Instances, and frequently Quoted divers *Liturgies, Epistles,*^{37.} and *Books*, which were afterwards discover'd to be *Counterfeit*; How desperately, and how long the *Greek and Latin Churches* have Quarrell'd about the Article of the *Pope's Supremacy*; How the *Primitive Christians* differed not only in matter of *Fact*, but even in the *Testimonies* concerning it, In the great Controversies about the Time of Celebrating *Easter*, and the *Re-baptizing* of *Hereticks*, both Sides pretended *Apostolical Tradition*, and consequently one of them was *Mistaken*, In the Debate about giving the *Eucharist* to *Infants*, the wrong Side prevail'd, even with the *Church of Rome*, which practis'd for about Six Hundred

K 2 Years

Years what upon better Consideration They *Reformed* afterwards, and have since changed accordingly.

§ 19. But these are slight Instances in comparison of the *Canon of Scripture*, wherein the *Christian Church* hath differ'd in all Ages; and surely if *Tradition* be of *Authority* in point of *Doctrine*, it ought to be so in this Important Case: And if the *Church* hath *Infallibility*, it should appear in this considerable Instance; but it is plain, that either she had it not, or broke her *Trust*, in not exercising it upon this Occasion; for the *Canon of Scripture* hath been always disputed, and the *Church of Rome* hath differed from it self, by *Receiving* the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which many of her Communion for a long time *Rejected*, and by adding the *Apocrypha* to the *Canon*, which *Ruffinus* says, he Received from the *Forefathers*, and which was formerly so far settled in the Council of *Laodicea*.

§ 20. But however it be with the *Catholick Church*, it is certain that the *Church of Rome* (notwithstanding its boast of *Unity*) hath been often and greatly *divided*. The *Papists* at this Day, not only differ from their great Champions *Bellarmino* and *Baronius*, but also from one another, and in Points of great Importance; The *Church of France* is as wide from the *Churches of Spain*

Spain and Italy, as one Pole is from the other, even in those great Articles of *Faith*, viz. The *Supremacy* and *Infallibility* of the *Pope*; The most celebrated Doctors of the *Roman Church* fiercely Contend about very Material Articles, So that it is not in the Power or Wit of Man, to Reconcile *Lau- noy, Du Pin*, and the Bishop of *Meaux*, to Cardinal *Bellarmino*, the *Dominicans* to the *Franciscans*, the *Scotists* to the *Thomists*, the *Molinists* to the *Jansenists*, the Councils of *Milan* and *Ariminum* to the Council of *Nice*, the Councils of *Constance* and *Basle* to the Council of *Lateran*, the Court of *Rome* to the Church of *Rome*, Old Popery to New Popery, or *Jesuitism* to Primitive Christianity.

§ 21. And it follows from hence, That they themselves do not believe, *that the Tradition of their Church is Infallible*; for if they did, it must immediately Determine all their *Controversies*; Nay, there could have been no *Contention* at all in the same Communion, because it is impracticable to Dispute a *Tradition*, which is allowed *Infallible* by themselves.

§ 22. And as to the Third, It is very Obvious, That the *Written Traditions* of the *Papists*, are very many of them *Suppositions*; The *Canons* and *Constitutions* which the Church of *Rome* has transmitted to us

as *Apostolical*, are not so, but the Productions of a subsequent Age, The *Decretal Epistles* of Popes for the First Three Hundred Years in favour of *Papal Supremacy*, are all *Forged*; and so is *Constantine's Donation*. There are *Fables* in the very Offices of Their Church, as *Melchior Canus* confesses, as *Constantine's Leprosie*, and the Cure of that *Emperor* by Pope *Sylvester's* Baptising him; The Abbot of *Clugny* says, that he found four and twenty *Lies* in one Hymn of *Benedict*, and this perhaps is one Reason, why Their *Liturgy* is conceal'd from the People in a *strange Language* which they do not understand; but however that be, This is Manifest, That their Books and Their *Controversies* abound in *Sophistry* and *Misrepresentation*, and are shap'd by their *Index Expurgatorius* to the Interest of their Party; and whilst they are purged of many useful and Important *Truths*, they are left stuffed with silly and Impudent *Lies*: So that their *Legends* and *Miracles* Remain the most Romantick and Diverting Stories in the World.

The same
Motive car-
ried the Ca-
tholicks so
far, as to In-
vent false
Miracles,
and false
Lives of the
Saints, to
Nourish and
keep up the
Piety of the
Faithful. Du
Pin. lib. 1.
Pref. 7.

§ 23. Is it not matter of *Sport*, to hear a Preacher gravely tell us, That *St. Patrick* Raised one from the *Dead*, that was almost *devoured* by Hogs, That he made a *Fire* of *Ice*, That his Boy came to *Ireland* sailing upon a *Stone*, That the Saint fed Fourteen
Thou-

Thousand with one Cow, two Staggs, and two Wild Boars, and the next Day the Cow was alive again. That *St. Dennis* carried his *Head* some Miles in his *Hands*, That *St. Dunstan* got the Devil by the *Nose* with a pair of *Tongs*, and the like. But the Consequence of these Superstitious Whimsies is fatal; for since the Miracles of *Christ* and the *Apostles* are a great Motive to our Belief, do not these Forged silly Miracles of the *Papists* scandalize that Foundation, and stab the *Christian Faith*, by drawing the *Real Miracles* into Question, and hardning the *Jews, Turks* and *Heathens* in their Infidelity? Nevertheless, the Histories of these prophane Fooleries are countenanc'd in the *Church of Rome*, and one of them is called the *Golden Legend*, but I know not why; for as *Ludovicus Vives* (a *Papist*) confesses, *It is unworthy Saints or Men, and was written by one of an Iron Forehead, and a Leaden Understanding.*

§ 24. And indeed, it favours of downright *Stupidity* or *Madness*, after the *Ridiculous Legends* and *fabulous Miracles*, suffered by the *Church of Rome* to pass for Current, amongst her *Credulous* and *Superstitious* *Votaries*, for any Man to venture His *Salvation*, upon the *Integrity* of her *Traditions*.

Du Pin. lib.
1. in Pref.
Pag. 7.

§ 25. But because it may seem Unaccountable, nay, even *Incredible*, That any Pretenders to *Religion* should be Guilty of such shameful Practices, it will not be amiss to hear a *Doctor of Sorbon* give us the reason how these things came to Pass; for in effect he tells us, That not only the *Malice* of Hereticks, but the *Indiscreet Zeal* of Ancient Christians, who thought it a *Pious Fraud* to forge *Lies* in favour of *Truth*; and even the *Wantonness* of some Authors (who diverted themselves at the expence of the *Folly* and *Credulity* of their *Readers*) have produced many *spurious Books* and *Impostures*, in the first Ages of the Church: Of this sort there are several *Counterfeit Gospels* and *Epistles* publish'd by *Catholicks*, and quoted by the *Fathers*, and of this sort, are the forg'd Letters in *Eusebius*, to and from *Agbarus* Prince of *Edessa*, The Books of the *Sybill*s, and many more.

Du Pin. lib.
1. Pag. 2,
17, 19.

§ 26. Now since it is so, That so many Ages and Nations have been Deluded by *Oral Tradition*, and that even the *Written Traditions* of the Church of Rome are many of them not only *Spurious*, but even *Ridiculous*, it is plain not only that the *Authority* and *Infallibility* of *Tradition* is Vanish'd, but that even the *Testimony* of *Tradition* is so far justly brought in question, that it must depend upon the *Probability* of the Thing,

Thing, The Credit of the Reporter, The Nature of the Proof, and the Circumstances of the Matter, by which we may distinguish false Traditions from true.

§ 27. Now tho' the Testimony of Oral Tradition, in the Customs of the Church, and Publick Matters of Practice, may in some Cases be very General, and for ought we know Unanimous and Constant, and may appear so to be, by Open and Uninterrupted Usage in the Churches we are acquainted with, and therefore may pass for Universal Traditions; tho' we cannot positively say, That they are so, if there were any Churches in the World, whose Traditions we do not know, yet since those Customs and Usages were derived from several Churches founded by the Apostles, and cannot be denied to be practised by the Primitive Christians, and do Remain and Continue in all the establish'd Christian Churches we know of, to this day, (as the Observation of Sunday, Water Baptism, Baptism of Infants, The order of Bishops, &c.) We may justly conclude, and even have a Moral Certainty, That they were of Apostolical Practice or Institution. But in matters of Doctrine, The Testimony of Oral Tradition cannot be so strong, unless we suppose, That all Christians were Unanimous therein, and that all

of them fully *Understood*, perfectly *Remembered*, and faithfully *Reported*, The whole *Unwritten Doctrine of Christ* and the *Apostles*, from one *Generation* to another, the contrary whereof appears, in the *Mistakes* of the first *Disciples*, which rendered it necessary to *Inspire Them*, and yet the very *Churches* planted by *Them*, also mistook, so that they had need to be *Taught again*, Heb. 5. 12. and in the *Tenth Century*, The *Church* was so corrupted with *Vice* and *Ignorance*, that *Learned Papists* confess, That the *Wicked and Illiterate Popes* of that Age, ought not to be mention'd, but to preserve the *Catalogue of Succession*; and if so, sure there ought not to be much dependence on the *Traditions* of that unhappy Age: But we need not look so far back, since the great *Heats and Divisions* of the *Prelates* and *Divines*, even at the *Council of Trent*, almost upon every Article, demonstrates the *Nullity, or Uncertainty* of their pretended *Traditions*.

§ 28. But of what effect soever the *Testimony* of *Tradition* may be when it is well *Examin'd*, and generally *Allow'd*, it will not be a ground for *Divine Faith*, unless its *Authority* be *Established*, so as to render it *Infallible*: In order whereunto these *Three Conditions* seems necessary.

§ 29. First, That the *Tradition* have a *Divine*

Dr. Tillotson.
720.

Baronius,
Anno 912.
n. 8.

Divine Original, it must commence from *Inspiration*; so that no *Tradition* can be *Infallible* that is not begun by *Christ* or the *Apostles*, and that (in point of *Doctrine*) seems delivered to Us in the *Apostles Creed*, as fully as they thought fit: So that it is dangerous to say, That any Article is *necessary to Salvation*, that is not contain'd therein; for if that Excellent Summary or *Creed* was compiled by the *Apostles*, then it is a Reproach to *them* to say, That it is *Imperfect* and *Insufficient*; and if it be *not Theirs*, *Oral Tradition* is not to be rely'd on, which has Represented it as *Theirs* for several hundred Years.

§ 30. Secondly, To render *Tradition* *Infallible*, it must necessarily proceed from the whole Church, else the *Tradition* cannot be *Universal* or *Authentick*; nay, it would be *Partial*, and evidence but of one part of the Church, for it self, against another, as the pretended *Tradition* of the *Pope's Supremacy* is, for the *Greek Church* always Oppos'd it. Now it is Manifest, That the whole Church never met to publish its Sentiments since the *Apostles Days*: So that it is absurd to say, That there is in point of *Doctrine*, any *Universal unwritten Tradition* of the whole Church; for supposing it might be so in fact, yet since there are *Christians* in the World who know nothing of us, nor we of them, we cannot

cannot tell what their *Tradition* is, or truly say, *that any Tradition is Universal*, nay, even the Christian Churches we do know of, have never been *uniform* in all their Sentiments, no not any particular Communion of it, even in points by some Esteemed *Fundamental*, gross *Errors* and *Heresies* crept early into the *Church*, and too many of them remain in some Churches to this Day, as hath been already said, and shall more amply be shewn hereafter.

§ 31. But what if the *Universal Christian Church* in all Ages had agreed in their *Traditions*, yet would it be but *partial Evidence* for it self, in respect of *Those without*: And if it have no Influence upon Us, That all the *Turks* agree in their Tradition concerning *Mahomet*, and that all the *Jews* agree in their Tradition of a *Princely Messiah*, why should it prevail upon *Them*? If all *Christians* should agree in their *Tradition* concerning the *Gospel*, The Point must be proved by other *Mediums*; as the *Purity* of the Doctrine, the *Inspiration* of the Preacher, manifested by the *Gift of Tongues*, or other *Miracles*, or the *Infallibility* of the Voucher.

§ 32. And that leads me to the third Condition requisite, which is *the Infallibility of the Church*: For it is not enough, That the *Tradition* is of *Divine Original*, and Testified to us by the *Catholick Church*, unless that

that Church be *Infallible*, else it may be mistaken it self, and may Report *untruly* to us, so that at last (turn which way you will) the *Authority of Tradition* must be Resolved into the *Infallibility of the Church*, and that must be proved by *Scripture*; for the Church cannot be *Witness for its self*, or Testify its own *Infallibility*, Nor is it the *Authority*, or *Infallibility*, but the *credible Testimony of the Church*, that Induces belief of the Gospel, for of Necessity, one must believe the Gospel before he can be a Member of the Church, or Acknowledge its *Authority*, or believe its *Infallibility*; and therefore, the memorable Expression of St. August. *Ego vero Evangelio non Crederem nisi me Ecclesia Comoverat Autoritas*, must be understood of the *Testimony of the Church*, and not of its *Infallible Authority*; and Imports no more, but that the Church being spitefully Divided into *Factions and Parties*, and differing in many other Things, did nevertheless agree in the Gospel, and that *Jesus is the Christ*, and therefore he believed their *Testimony* therein, as supposing, that the Church would have differed in *that Article*, as well as in many others, if it had not been so clear and undeniable a Truth, that it never met with opposition amongst *Christians*; and if St. *Augustine* meant more than this, he meant it of the Church in the *Apostles*

Consensus
Ecclesiae non
est Principi-
um constitu-
tium rerum
Credenda-
rum sed
Confirmati-
vum seu
Roborati-
vum tantum
Hornæus de
Sacr. Script.

* Ibi enim
Ecclesiam
sumit pro
primitiva
Congregatione
fidelium
eorum qui
Christum
viderunt
audierunt,
& sui Testes
extiterunt
Gerson.

Quæ sane
Ecclesia
complectitur
Collegium
Apostolorum
Driedo.

* *Apostles* Days, for Their *Miracles* testify'd
their *Inspiration*, and rendred their Testi-
mony *Infallible*, of *Authority*, and in effect
Divine: But the *Tradition* of the succeeding
Church since that time, can be but *Humane*
Testimony, unless it be likewise *Inspir'd* by
the *Holy Ghost*; and tho' its *Traditions* were
True, yet unless they could *Infallibly* appear
to Us to be so, They would not be of *Autho-
rity*, but like other *Humane* Traditions
and Histories, be subject to Disquisition and
Debate.

§ 33. And therefore, the Fathers have
always distinguished between the writings
of the *Apostles*, and the Traditions of *others*,
and declare the former to be *Infallible*, but
all the rest to be *liable to Mistake*, and
therefore advise us to be content with the
Scripture, which is full, and sufficient, and of
Divine Authority, and not Resign our selves
blindly to the Designs and Inventions of
Men: For, says St. *Hierom*. *Those things
which Men Invent of themselves, as it were by
Apostolical Tradition, without the Witness and
Authority of the Holy Scriptures, are Confound-
ed by God.*

§ 34. By what has been said, it is not
the *Testimony*, but the *Authority* of Traditi-
on that is rejected, but even the *Testimony*
of it may be examin'd, and be more or
less Regarded, according to the Circum-
stances

stances of the Matter, and where-ever it is found to Answer the famous Rule of * *Vincentius Lyrinensis* of being approv'd, in all Places, in all Ages, and by all Persons it must be allow'd as an *universal Tradition*, and may justly require every Bodies Submission to it: But sure there can be no *universal Tradition* in any point in *Dispute*, nor any *Dispute* about points that are establish'd by *such Tradition*.

* Comonitor. c. 4.

§ 35. Since therefore no *Tradition* can be *Infallible*, that is not *Divine* or *Apostolical* in the Commencement, and attested by the *whole Church* in all Ages, which cannot be in any Article in *debate*, for where *Some* differ, *All* can't Agree, nor can it be certainly known in any Article at all, because the *Church* is or has been extended to places unknown to Us. And since the *Testimony* of the *whole Church*, is but partial Evidence for it self, as to *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Heathens*, and consequently of no *Authority* with them, and even to *Christians*, cannot be of *undoubted Authority* unless the *Church* be *Infallible*; and since the *Testimony* of a *Fallible Church* is in its own nature Uncertain, and may or may not be *true*, as it happens, and can at best produce but *Moral certainty*; which *Papists* say is not a sufficient Ground for *Divine Faith*: And since there is no *Fundamental Point of Faith*, which

which needs the help of an *Infallible Tradition*, but is sufficiently Revealed in *Scripture*, So that if it be not *derived thence*, We ought to Reject it, as St. *Hierome* observes, *Hoc quia de Scripturis non habet auctoritatem eadem facilitate contemnitur qua probatur*, We may safely conclude, That *Tradition* is not the *Rule of Faith*. And indeed, unless there be two *Rules of Faith*, They give up the Point, who Assert the Necessity, and Own the Authority of an *Infallible Church*, which is the next thing we are to enquire after.

Coment, in
Matth. 23.
Tom. 9.

C H A P. IX.

Of the C H U R C H.

§ 1. **H**AVING as I suppose justly Rejected *Oral Tradition* from being a *Rule of Divine Faith*, I now proceed to Inquire into the Nature and Authority of *the Church*, to see if I can find better Guidance, or greater Security there.

§ 2. And to do this, I ought in course to explain what I mean by the word *Church*, and the rather because the World has been much abused by the equivocal use of that Word; and tho' there is nothing more disingenuous than to *Equivocate*, and to take the *same* Word, in *different* Senses, in the Propositions of the *same* Syllogism, or to give a general Epithet to any thing, which is only Applicable to it in a particular sense of the *Word*, and afterwards to use the *same Expression* in another Acceptation: Yet this unfair *Sophistry* hath been too much used, and manifestly with design to Delude the *Simple*, and to Impose upon Men of small Understanding.

§ 3: Since

§ 3. Since therefore contention in Words
 2 Tim. 2. 14. is profitable for nothing but the subversion of
 them that hear. We ought to be as clear and
 plain as possible, in discovering what is
 meant by the Word Church, and in what
 Senses it is taken in Scripture.

§ 4. The Church, Ecclesia, Gr. Ἐκκλησία,
 ab evocando, Imports Evocation, or Calling
 out, so that, The Church signifies An Assem-
 bly, or Congregation, called out, distinguish'd,
 or separated, from Unbelievers: Thus, Acts
 7. 38. and, Heb. 12. 23. The Word Church
 is taken for an Assembly, and, Num. 20. 4.
 and, Psal. 26. 5. it is taken for a Congregation,
 so that We may define the Christian Church
 to be. The General Assembly or Congregation
 of Believers in Jesus Christ, called thereunto
 by the Preaching of The Gospel.

§ 5. In Scripture, the Word Church is
 variously Used: first, for the Temple, or
 place of Worship, The Dominicum, or House
 of God, and it seems thus taken, Acts 19. 37.
 Robbers of Churches; and, 1 Cor. 11. 18.
 When ye come together in the Church, that is,
 The place of Worship, and perhaps it may be
 so taken, 1 Tim. 3. 15. That thou mayst know
 how to behave thy self in the House of God,
 which is the Church of the living God, The Pil-
 lar and ground of Truth, for that Text seems,
 in the Judgment of Good Commentators,
 to allude to The Temple, but since the Word

House,

House, v. 4. signifies *The Family*, I will not Contend, but that it may do so here, and Import *The Family* or Congregation of Believers under *Timothy's* Charge, *Clergy* and *People*, And whether his *Jurisdiction* was Confin'd to *Ephesus* only, or extended to all *Asia*, or the whole *Eastern Church*, either way This Text can make nothing for the *Infallibility* of *The Western Church* of *Rome*, tho' it is often disingeniously cited to that purpose.

§ 6. Secondly, It is taken for a particular Congregation of Christians in that Town, Place, or Nation, as 1 Pet. 5. 13. *The Church* at *Babylon*, *Acts* 13. 1. *The Church* at *Antioch*, *Acts* 14. 23. He gathered the Church together, i. e. the Congregation, 1 Tim. 5. 16. Let not the Church be charged, that is, the People, and Mat. 18. 17. Tell it to the Church, i. e. the Congregation; as I suppose, tho' some Interpret it of the Clergy, but sure Improperly, else They must have a decisive Authority in Civil Controversies.

§ 7. Thirdly, *The Church* is taken for the Elect, such as shall be Saved, who in truth are properly *The Church*, for these are the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, Heb. 12. 23. These are the Glorious Church mention'd, Eph. 5. 27. whereof more, when we come to the Epithet *Holy*; in the mean time, We

may observe, That since all the *Elect* are not of any *particular Church* or *Communion*, (for there have been *Fathers, Saints* and *Martyrs* as well of the *Greek Church* as of the *Roman*) it seems very wrong to denominate the *Church* from its outward form, or Appropriate Salvation to any *particular Communion*, or *Party* of *Christians*, Exclusively of the rest.

§ 8. Fourthly, The Word *Church* is taken for the *Christian Religion*, or the *Doctrine* and *Worship of Christ*, and so it seems to be used in that Remarkable Text, *Mat. 16. 18. Upon this Rock will I build my Church*, that is, Upon this Confession of Faith that *Jesus is the Christ*, will I build my *Religion* and *Worship*, and the whole *Society of Christians* which compose my *Church*, shall be distinguish'd from the rest of the *World*, by this *Criterion* or *Creed*, of believing that *Jesus is the Christ*, so in the same verse it is said, That the *Gates of Hell* shall not prevail against the *Church*, which I conceive must be understood, that they shall not prevail against The *Christian Religion*, or the *Doctrine of Jesus Christ*.

§ 9. Lastly, The Word *Church* is taken for the *Universal or Catholick Church*, The *Christian Society*, the *Collective Body of Christians*, *L'esglise Universelle* as the French *Creed*

Creed has it, *All that worship Christ or profess Christianity in the Universe, in short, for The whole Church, thus Eph. 5. 24. The Church is subject to Christ, that is the whole Church, so Acts 2. 47. The Lord added to the Church, or to the society of Christians, so Eph. 5. 23. Christ is head of the Church, or as the Rhemists have it, of all the Church, and Ephes. 5. 25. Christ delivered Himself for the Church, or the whole Church, Saints and Sinners, * Tares and Wheat; Hereticks and Orthodox; for as hath been observed, The Church signifying an Assembly or Congregation, it must needs follow, That [†] all who Assemble to worship Christ are of the Christian Church, and accordingly Elders were Ordained for every Church or Congregation, Acts 14. 23. tho' perhaps there were some Schismatics, and even Hereticks amongst them, and accordingly St. Hierome allows, that Heresy or Schism do not destroy the validity of Orders, and St. Augustin does admit The Donatist Bishops to have valid Orders; Origen and Tertullian (tho' Hereticks) are esteemed Fathers, and allowed to have dyed in the Communion of the Church, and tho' some Papists (when it serves their purpose) deny that Protestants are Christians, yet they allow of our Baptism, which surely none but a Christian can administer.*

Mat. 13.

25.
2 Tim. 2. 20.

[†] In Christum
credens Po-
pulus.

Hierom con-
tra Lucife-
rianos.

Da Pin. 234.

§ 10. These then seem to be the Acceptations of the Word *Church* in *Scripture*, and perhaps it may be taken in some *other Sence* which I have not Observed, and need not mention, because the distinctions already made will be sufficient, to detect the *Sophistry* of those who *Equivocate* in this matter, and to give satisfactory Answers to all their captious Questions.

§ 11. For, If it be demanded, 1st. Is the Church *visible*? It will appear that it is so, as to its *outward* form and profession; but it is not so, as to the *inward* Faith and Piety of the *Elect*, who are properly and essentially *The Church*. 2dly. Is the Church *One*? yes, in respect of its *Faith in Christ*, and its common *hope* of Salvation; but in other Articles and Opinions wherein Christians *differ*, and split into Factions, and different Communion, the Church is multiplied and divided, and there are as many *Churches* as there are *separate Congregations*, or Communion. 3dly. Is the Church *Holy*? yes, in respect of the Holy Doctrine of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, which *the whole Church* professeth, but is not practically so, whilst so many *Hypocrites* and *Reprobates* are of it; unless the Church be taken *strictly* for the better part of it *The Elect*. 4thly. Is the Church *Catholick*, or *Universal*? yes, *The whole Church* is, but not any *Part* of it, tho' never

never so Great; as the *Greek Church*, the *Roman Church*, the *Church of England*, or any other distinct Congregation, Party or Communion of Christians whatsoever. 5thly. Is the Church *Apostolick*? yes, in respect of its *Faith in Christ*, and other Apostolick doctrines which it retains; but those parts of the Church which have in any Points varied from the Doctrine of the *Apostles*, or have Impos'd other Terms of *Salvation*, as Necessary, than the *Apostles* did, are neither *Apostolick* nor Orthodox in that respect. 6thly. Is the Church a *Society* capable to Direct, Govern, or make Laws? And 'tis plain that the *Universal Church* is not, but *Particular Churches* are; for tho' the *whole Church* is a *Society*, yet it is not capable to Meet, and consequently not to Govern or make Laws. 7thly. Who are *Members* of the Church? If the *Universal Church* be meant, all Christians, even Reprobates, Hereticks, Schismaticks and others whatsoever who profess Christianity, (be their Errors never so great) are outward Members of it; but if by the Church be meant the *Elect*, then all that shall be Saved are Members of it, all Hereticks, Schismaticks, Persons Excommunicated, and all other Christians that will Repent, and so only Reprobates are Excluded. But if by Church be

meant any *particular Church*, then all Reprobates, Hypocrites and Hereticks who are in *Outward Communion* with it, and submit to the Laws of the *Society*, are of it, and only Schismaticks and Persons Excommunicated are excluded.

§ 12. And so I should come to the main Question, viz. *Whether the Church be Infallible?* For if it be not, it cannot be the *Rule of Faith*; and if it be, we ought to follow it wherever it leads us. So that this Important Point is of the last Consequence; and therefore should be well *examined* and well *understood*: And in order to it, some Preliminaries are to be considered.

§ 13. And first, It is beyond Controversie, that no Church but *The Universal Church* can pretend to *Infallibility*, for *The Church* in the first Sense, as it is taken for the *Material Tèple* or *Place of Worship* is senseless, and can neither be *Guide* nor *Rule*.

§ 14. Nor Secondly, can the *Church* in the second Sense, as it is taken for a *particular Church*, as the Church of Rome, Church of England, or the like, pretend to be *Infallible*, (nor the Clergy or Pastors of particular Churches, even supposing that the Text, Matth. 18. 17. *Tell the Church* related to Them, because *Trespases* and *Civil Controversies*, are the subject Matter of that Text)

Text) for there is no Promise of *Infallibility* made in *Scripture* to any *Particular Church*, or the Pastors of it; and it would not answer the *End*, if they had it, for their Influence and *Authority*, being confin'd to their proper *Jurisdiction*, could not extend beyond their Limits, nor be a *Rule of Faith* out of their *Diocess*: So that either *every particular Church is Infallible*, within its own Precincts, or no *particular Church* is so, unless a special Designation and Appointment by *Christ* can be expressly shown for it; which has not yet been done.

§ 15. Nor Thirdly, can the *Church* as taken for the *Elect* be *Infallible*, since there is no Promise *that they shou'd*, and it wou'd be of no Use *if they were*, for no Body can tell *who* are the *Elect*, God alone who searches the Heart, can only distinguish the *Hypocrite* from the *Holy*, and the *Saint* from the *Sinner*.

§ 16. Nor Fourthly, can the *Church* as taken for the *Christian Religion* answer our End, for that is *Petitio Principii*, the very thing we are seeking for an *Infallible Guide* to direct us to: And if the Word *Church* should in that Text, *Matth 16. 18.* be taken for the *Society of Christians*, yet either that must Include *all Christians*, and that is the *Church Universal*; or if it be restrain'd to,

to any *particular Communion*, its Testimony of its own *Infallibility* is *partial* and of no effect, for that is also *petitio principii*: When we are seeking for a *Rule* to direct us, what *particular Communion* to adhere unto.

§ 17. So that we are left to the *Church* in the last Sense, as it is *Catholick* and *Universal*, and *Comprehends* all the *Christians* in the *World*, *Clergy* and *People*: And if there be any *Infallibility* in the *Church*, we must expect to find it *There*; for that is in truth, the *One holy Catholick and Apostolick Church* mentioned in the *Creed*: And it may be convenient for our clearer Information, first to shew in what respect those Epithets are Attributed to the *Church*, and then to shew That she is not *Infallible*.

§ 18. And first, It must be observed, That all these Qualities relate to the *Universal Church*, in contradistinction to *particular Churches*, which cannot in reason be suppos'd to be Regarded in the *Universal Creed*, any otherwise than as Members of the *Universal Church*, and comprehended therein: And this will plainly appear, if we consider how these Qualities are applied to the *Universal Church*.

§ 19. For the *Church* is *One*, not in respect of any Thing Extrinsicall or Accidental, as *Time*, *Place*, *Rites*, *Ceremonies*, or any *Outward Form*, or Unnecessary Terms of *Com-*

munion

munion: For as these Things are in their own Nature *variable*, So Men are left to their *Christian Liberty*, until Order be taken therein, by their Lawful Superiors, for *Decency* and *Edification*; *Christians* were not all in being much less converted at the same Time, *Christianity* spread by degrees, and was not appropriated (as *Judaisme* was) to a certain Place; Nor are all Churches oblig'd to the same Rites and Ceremonies, except such as are prescribed in *Scripture*: Every Church had formerly a particular *Ritual*; and several Churches practised Ceremonies different from the *Roman*; The *Musarabick* Use of celebrating Mass (till of late) was practised every Sunday at *Toledo*, and the Church of *Milan* had an Use of her own, which varied from the *Roman*, in very important Things. The *Primitive Christians* doubtless performed their Divine Service in their *Mother Tongue*, and as *Origen* says, every one prayed to God, and praised Him, in their own *Dialect*, but the Churches in *Communion* with *Rome* by degrees followed her Example, and performed their Devotions in *Latin*, and even in the *Roman Communion* they used different *Liturgies*; some Administred *Secundum usum Sarum*, and others *Secundum usum Romanum*, Some Administer'd *Extream Unction* after the *Gregorian*, and some after the

Orig. cont.
 Celsum. pag.
 402.

to any *particular Communion*, its Testimony of its own *Infallibility* is *partial* and of no effect, for that is also *petitio principii*: When we are seeking for a *Rule* to direct us, what *particular Communion* to adhere unto.

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Orig. cont.
Celsum. pag.
492.

Du Pin. 151.

the *Ambrosian* manner: But at length the very *Roman Ritual* was alter'd; as may appear, by comparing it with the *Ancient Ordo Romanus*: So that to prefer the *Modern Roman Ritual* is to condemn all *Antiquity*, say a Doctor of *Sorbon*.

Bell. 128.

§. 20. It is beyond Dispute, not only that distinct Churches varied in external Matters that were not *Essential*, but also that the very same Church differed from its self in different times. At first Christians Received the Sacrament *leaning* or *lying* down as at Supper, and prayed *standing*; but now generally do Both *kneeling*: At first Baptism was by *Immersion*, afterwards by *Sprinkling*: At first the Romans Received the Sacrament in Both kinds, according to *Christ's Institution*, Afterwards ~~they~~ denied the *Cup* to the *Laity*: At first many Christians Abstained from things strangled and Blood, which few or none do now: And many more Instances might be produced to shew, That the *Unity of the Church* is not in any thing external or accidental.

§ 21. It follows then, That the *Essential Unity of the Church* is *Spiritual* and *Intrinsecal*, in *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*; and by this Union, tho' many Members they make but one Body, 1 Cor. 12. 12. John 10. 16. under one Head Christ Jesus, Eph. 1. 22. Colos. 1. 18. And by this Union the
Church

Church is of *one Christian Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. And as external Marks of this Unity, they are all Initiated and brought in to the Church by *one Baptism*, and remain ^{1 Cor. 12.} in *Catholick Communion*, by partaking of the ^{13.} same *Eucharist*.

§ 22. But this *Unity of Faith* extends no farther, than to *Essential* and *Fundamental* Articles, which indeed are few; and as *St Irenaeus* says, are contained in the *Creed*, ^{l. 1. adv. Heres. c. 2.} and was in Substance *the same* from the Beginning; for tho' Language and Expressions may vary, and even the *Revelation* it self become *clearer* to Us in Time, and will be *perfect* in Glory, Eph. 4. 13. yet the *Faith* is but *One* and the same, Eph. 4. 5. viz. *The Christian Faith*, contain'd in the *Apostles Creed*, And tho' Paraphrases of Learned Men may *explain* the Words, and help us to understand the Meaning, yet the whole World cannot make any *Material Alteration* of the Thing it self, nor any *Addition* to it, without *Inspiration* from the *Almighty*, for that were to *preach a New Gospel*, which ^{Gal. 1. 9.} whoever doth is accursed.

§ 23. And it is *Faith* in these *Fundamental Articles* that creates the *Unity*, and *denominates the Religion*; so that all who believe in *Jesus Christ* and him *Crucified*, and the necessary Consequences thereof, are truly *Christians*, and of the *Christian Religion*, altho'

tho' they differ, and even Err in other Matters and Opinions, and as the *Papists* (tho' they disagree among Themselves in very Important Points, viz. The *Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin, The *Divine Right* of *Episcopacy*, and even in Matters which they own are of Faith, as *Free-will*, the *Infallibility* of the *Pope*, the *Pope's Supremacy* above *Councils*, &c.) are all of one Religion: So tho' *Protestants* and *Papists* disagree about *Indulgences*, *Purgatory*, *Images*, *Transubstantiation*, &c. Yet are they all of the same *Christian Religion*, and Initiated thereinto by the same *Baptism*, and believe the same *Nicene Creed*, which was recited, and owned Their *Creed*, at the opening of the *Council of Trent*: So that nothing can be more wrong than to say, that *Christians*, who preserve the *Unity* of the Faith in *Fundamentals*, are of different Religions, nor more absurd, than to demand of a *Protestant* where was his Religion before *Luther*, for it was every where, where the fundamental and essential *Articles of the Creed* were professed; and if one should think that *Arius*, *Socinus*, and such other *Heretics* were excluded from the *Pale* of the Church, as held erroneous Opinions about the *Trinity*, which is the main Article of *Revealed Religion*, yet that would not affect *Protestants*, who agree with all *Orthodox*

dox Christians, and particularly with the Church of Rome, as far as it is Orthodox, viz. in all Fundamentals, and in all Creeds established in the Church for the first Seven Hundred Years, if not to the time of the Council of Trent.

§ 24. Besides, There is nothing more absurd and Impossible, than that two Christians should be of different Religions, tho' they were of different Communions, and disagreed in Points not Essential; for if it can be prov'd, that the erring Party is of a different Religion, that is, that he denies the Gospel or the Fundamentals of Christianity; at the same time 'tis prov'd, That he is no Christian.

§ 25. Secondly, *The Unity of the Church*, is in the same Hope of the Common Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord: And who-
Eph. 4. 4
ever has this Hope well grounded, will have Affection, and Charity, for all others of the same Hope, and will neither Persecute Them in this World, nor rashly exclude them from Happiness in the next, tho' They dissent from Them in Outward Communion, or in Articles not Essential, and tho' They use other Language, Rites, or Ceremonies, than are practis'd in their Society.

§ 26. Thirdly, *The Unity of the Church* consists in Charity, which is so essential to Christianity, that 'tis impossible to be a good Chri-

Christian without it, tho' one had *Faith* to remove *Mountains*, yet without *Charity* it would profit him nothing. *Charity* is the *Bond of Perfection*, Colos. 3. 14. All the *Elect* have it, and *they* which are strictly and properly the *Church*, are of *one Heart and one Mind*, in the Practice of this Great Duty, and in following the charitable Example of their Great Master, the Blessed *Jesus*: And therefore good Christians, tho' they differ in lesser matters, or are mis-led into *Schism* by mistake, yet even in *different Communi- ons*, they will strive to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3, 16. well knowing, That such was the Temper and Practice of their Blessed Saviour.

§ 27. These then are the Points in which the *Unity of the Church* consists, but for *Unity* in collateral Opinions, or *Infallibility* in them, it is not to be expected; for God has no where promised, to preserve the *Church* from Errors in *Doctrine* more than from Errors in *Practice*: People may Err, and may Sin, nay *Heresies must be*, 1 Cor. 11. 19. But if those Errors are not destructive of the *Foundation*, and those Sins are repented of, the Parties may be of the *Elect*, and consequently *Members of the Church*, in the purest Sense: The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the *Church* to its Desolation, but the *Church* may suffer

Temp-

Temptation, and Persecution, and be reduc'd very Low, and no part of it is secure from *Error* any more than than the Seven Churches of *Asia*, whose Candlesticks are removed : But there shall still remain some *Christians* who will profess all necessary saving Truths, and preserve the *Unity of the Church*, in Faith, Hope, and Charity.

§ 28. The second *Essential Quality* of the Church, is *Holiness* : And surely the Church of Christ may well be Termed *Holy*, as well in respect of the *Purity* of the Doctrine it professes, as because it is Separated, Devoted, and Consecrated, to God, and indeed This Attribute of *Holy*, is so Essential to the Church, that properly and strictly speaking, none but the *Holy*, the *Elect*, are Members of it ; for as St. *Ambrose* on the 35th Psalm observes, *As the Godly are Members of Christ, so the Wicked are Members of the Devil* ; and therefore cannot be of the *Glorious Church*, They cannot be fitly joined to Christ, Eph. 4. 16. nor does Christ dwell in them, Eph. 3. 17. They are not of Christ, for they have not his Spirit, Rom. 8. 9. They are not united in the Spirit of God, as all the Members of the Church of Christ are ; 1 Cor. 12. On the contrary, they are united with the Spirit of the Devil ; and as St. *Augustine* observes, *He cannot be part of*

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De Deff.
Christ. l. 3.
c. 32.

Christ's Body, who is not to remain with him for ever ; And the Church is the Myſtical Body of Christ ; and therefore Reprobates and wicked Persons, tho' they are in the external Communion of the Church, *de corpore Ecclesia*, as Bellarmine phrases it, yet they are not, *de anima Ecclesia*, nor properly Members of the Church, for the Wicked are not Christ's Sheep, Joh. 10. 26. And so says St. Hierom, *Qui peccator est, de Ecclesia Christi non Appellatur* : Impenitent Sinners are not properly Members of the Church. If this be so, surely it will be very unlikely, that any Church which promotes Superstition, and practiseth Idolatry, which Countenances Rebellion, and permits Equivocation, which enjoyns Ignorance, and exerciseth Cruelty, or by Dispensations and Indulgences encourages Immorality, should be That Holy Church ; and it is yet more absurd to Imagine, that those wicked Popes were Heads of the Church, who were not qualified to be Members of it, within this Essential Character of Holy.

§ 29. The Third Epithet of the Church is Catholick, a Greek Word signifying the same as Universal, and added by the Greek Church to the Creed, tho' now the Papists would exclude Them out of the Church, by that very Word in the Creed which the Greeks themselves put in.

§ 30. The

§ 30. The word *Catholick*, or *Universal*, seems to be used in Opposition to the *Legal Singularity* of the *Jewish Nation*, and Imports, That the *Gospel* was not limited to the *Jews* Rom. 10. 12. only, but extended also to the *Gentiles*, to the *Universe*, to all *Nations* in the *World*; not that it was *actually* preached to every body; but *Salvation by Christ* was offered to *All Mankind*: So that neither *Greek* nor *Barbarian*, *Bond* nor *Free*, who believe the *Gospel*, are excluded from the *Means of Grace*, and the *Hope of Glory*; for *Christ* has *Redeemed* us out of *every Kindred and Tongue and People and Nation*, *Rev. 5. 9.* So that in all *Parts of the Universe*, *He that feareth God and worketh Righteousness is accepted with Christ*, *Acts 10. 35.* And therefore all *Believers in Christ* are actually *Members of the Catholick Church*, and even *Unbelievers* are potentially so, that is, They may be of the *Church*, whenever they do believe.

§ 31. This *Catholick Church* comprehends all the *Believers in Christ*, that were, are, or shall be, from the beginning to the end of the *World*, whether now in *Heaven*, or hereafter to be there, *The whole Family of Believers*, *Eph. 3. 15.* and so it is meant in the *Creed*, in the *Article of The Catholick Church*, and in the *Article of The Communion of Saints*.

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[§ 32. And

§ 32. And as the *Church* extends to all *Persons*, so it does to all *Places*, *ubique diffusa* says *Optatus* l. 2. and *St. Aug.* in *Psal.* 62. Not that there *are* actually *Christians* in every *Country* or *Nation*, but that there *may be* : For our *Blessed Saviour* has excluded no *Place*, but has published the *Gospel* of *Salvation* for all the *World*, even to as many as *believe*, in every *Place*, *Nation*, or *Country*, of the whole *Earth* ; and since *Jerusalem* is not now the *only Place* where *God* will be *Worshipped*, *Joh.* 4. 21. Certainly *Men* ought to *Pray every where*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. for *Grace* and *Faith* to become *Members* of *Christ's Mystical Body*, which is, *The One Holy Catholick and Apostolick Church*.

§ 33. Nor is the *Church* less *Catholick* in respect of *Time*, for it was from the beginning and shall be *Perpetual*, it is *Indefectible* and shall never fail ; for the *Holy Ghost* will be with it to the *End of the World*, that is, from the *Promulgation* of the *Gospel*, there always hath been, and to the end of the *World* there shall be, *Christians* *Men* professing *Jesus Christ* and him *Crucified*, and such other *Articles* of the *Christian Faith*, as are *Necessary* to *Salvation* ; And this *Multitude* of *Believers* in all *Ages*, is the *Catholick Church*, which is therefore *Styled Catholick or Universal*, in *Contra-*

tradistinction to *Particular Churches*, all which it comprehends, and which are extrinsically Members of this Great Body.

§ 34. The Church therefore is justly Styl'd *Catholick*. 1st. In respect of *Persons*, for it comprehends every Body, that did, or will Believe. It is like a *City*, One Body Politick or Corporation united by Charter, tho' consisting of many *Guilds* or *Fraternities* and *Individuals*, which it comprehends: The *City* is the *Genus*, the *Guilds* and *Fraternities* are the *Species*, and the *People* are the *Individuals*. In like manner, The *Catholick Church* is the *Genus*, the *Churches* of *Rome*, *Greece*, *England*, &c. are the *Species*, and the *People*, or the several *Congregations*, are the *Individuals*: And from thence we may Reproach the Folly of those who ask, *Which is the Catholick Church?* For it is as silly, as to ask, *Which is the World? England or Italy?* For, since the *Roman* and *Protestant Churches* are but *Parts* of the *Catholick Church*, it is as absurd to say, *That the Roman is the Catholick or Universal Church*, as to say, *That the English Sea is the whole Ocean*.

§ 35 Secondly, The Church is *Catholick* in respect of *Place*, not confined to the *Holy Land*, but extended to all *Parts* of the *Earth* where *Christianity* is professed.

§ 36. Thirdly, The Church is Catholick in respect of Time, Christianity was from the Beginning of the Gospel, and will continue to the End of the World; for so God Almighty has promised.

Quis per
Romanam
Ecclesiam
unquam In-
telligit aut
Universa-
lem Ecclesi-
am aut Ge-
nerale Con-
cilium Al-
bertus Pig-
nus Eccl.
Hier. l. 6.
c. 3.

§ 37. By what has been said, it is plain, that the Church of Rome cannot without Absurdity be styled the Catholick Church in any of these Respects: For First, She does not comprehend all Persons who believe in Christ, for there are many good Christians, even of the Elect, which are not of her Communion, as Greeks, Protestants, &c. And this plain Truth, Pope Innocent the Third is forced to confess, *Dicitur* (says he) *Universalis Ecclesia, Quae de Universis constat Ecclesiis. (Quae de Graco vocabulo vocatur Catholica) & secundum hanc Acceptationem vocabuli, Ecclesia Romana non est universalis Ecclesia, sed Pars Universalis Ecclesia.*

§ 38. Secondly, Nor does the Church of Rome comprehend all Places where Christianity is professed, and particularly not England, Sweden, Ethiopia and Greece, &c. Nor Thirdly is the Church of Rome Catholick in respect of Time, for there were Christian Churches before her, at Jerusalem and Antioch, in Greece and other Places: So that there was a Time, when Christianity was and she was not, and it may be so again, for she has no Certainty of enduring for ever, there

there is no such Promise made to Her; on the contrary, She has *changed* both her *Faith* and *Practice*, and is Threatned with Destruction unless she takes care, *She will Prosper if She continues in the Goodness of God, otherwise she shall be cut off*, Rom. 11. 22.

§ 39. But the Word *Catholick* in process of Time, was by the *Fathers* often used for the Word *Orthodox*, and is in that Sense frequently applied to *Particular Churches* that held the *true Faith* without Mixture of *Fundamental Error*, and is often used in Opposition to what was *Hetrodox* or *Heretical*. *They are Catholicks* says the Law of *Theodosius* *who Adore the Trinity with equal Honour, and they who think otherwise are to be called Hereticks*, Sozomen. l. 7. c. 4. And in this Sense St. *Aug. Epist.* 116. calls the Emperors *Catholick*, and Ep. 152. he calls the *Africans Catholicks* (*non solum Catholica Transmarina verum etiam Catholica Africana*) and in this Sense, the *Papists* may pretend their *Pope* and themselves to be *Catholicks*, (as the *Nestorians* called their *Patriarch Catholick* heretofore.) And the Question will be, *Whether they are Orthodox or no?* But it can be no Question, whether the *Church of Rome*, and all the Churches in Communion with her, are *The whole Church*; for it's manifest, That *they are not*, and that all of them together,

are but a *part* of the *whole* Christian Church; and therefore, it is detestable Sophistry in those who use the Word *Catholick* promiscuously, and apply its different significations in the same Sylogism, to deceive the Ignorant and Unwary: For thus in effect they Argue.

The Catholick (i. e. Universal) Church is the Rule of Faith.

The Roman Church is the Catholick (i. e. Orthodox) Church,

Therefore the Roman Church is the Rule of Faith.

§ 40. Which that I may explain to the Vulgar, I will put into common Terms, and then they will perceive the odious Fallacy of the Argument, *viz.*

A Pound is Twenty Shillings.

But 16 Ounces of Lead is a Pound.

Therefore 16 Ounces of Lead is Twenty Shillings.

And as here the Fallacy lies in the equivocal use of the Word *Pound*, so there it lies in the double Acceptation of the word *Catholick*.

§ 41. Nor will it help them to say, That as God is *Dominus Universalis*, because he is Lord and Governor of the Universe; so the *Church of Rome* may be called *Catholick* or *Universal*, because she is *Mother and Mistress of all Churches*, and sovereign Govern-
ness

ness of the *whole Church*, because the *fact* is not true ; for *Jerusalem* is *The Mother of all Churches*, and if it were true, yet her *partial* Title to that Appellation in *some sense*, would not justify her using it in *all senses*, nor Intitle her separately to any Quality appropriated to *the whole Church*, and particularly not to be *Infallible*, or to be *the Rule of Faith*.

§ 42. But to Proceed, The Fourth Epithet of the Church is *Apostolick*, which Imports, That the *Church* should hold and profess the same *Faith* which the *Apostles* Preached, and the Primitive Christians believed ; So that the Doctrine of the *Apostles* (which is summarily couched in the *Creed* attributed to Them) should be the Touchstone of *Christian Religion*, and the certain mark of the *True Church* for ever.

§ 43. And thus one may perceive, That the *One Holy Catholick and Apostolick Church* in the *Creed*, is not any *Particular Church* ; As The *Eastern Church*, or the *Western Church*, the *Church of Greece*, the *Church of Rome*, or the *Church of England*, how large or numerous soever their *Communion* may be : But the *Universal Church*, which consists of *all the Churches*, and all the Christians in the *World*, For all these Qualities of *Christ's Church* are prescribed to *the whole Church*. It is not any *single Church* that is enjoined
to

to be *One*, for 'tis so in its own Nature already, but it is *The Universal Church*, that is, *A L L the Churches in the World*, that are to be *One*, in *Faith* in Christ, in *Hope* of Salvation, and in *Charity* towards one another, and so become one *Body* under *Christ* its Head, so neither is it any *one Church* that is to be *Holy*, but the duty of *Holiness* (*which is the Design of Christianity*) is enjoined to *the whole Church*, to every Church, to all Churches : So that all Christians ought to be *Holy as Christ is Holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 16. and accordingly it is *the Universal Church* that is stiled *Holy* in the *Creed*. In like manner no *particular Church* can be stiled *Catholick* or *Universal*, for that would be a contradiction in Terms, and therefore that Epithet must of necessity belong to the *whole Church*, since the Words *Catholick* and *Universal* are but different Expressions for the same Thing. And lastly, The Word *Apostolick* cannot relate to a *Particular Church*, for tho' the Apostles founded several Churches, which are Members of the *Catholick Church*, Yet since the Doctrine of the Apostles was published to direct *the whole Church*, of which *Christ* is the Principal, and *They* the Secondary Foundation, It cannot be conceived, but that in a *Creed* composed for *All Christians*, *The Universal Church* must necessarily be meant.

§ 44. So that it is plain even to Demonstration, that if any *Church* can be *the Rule of Faith*, it must be, *The Church Universal*, for no *Particular Church* can pretend to *Infallibility*, or even to *Indefectibility*, at least there is no ground for such pretence, *Particular Churches* may indeed oblige their *Members* to such *Rites, Ceremonies, and Discipline*, as are not sinful: And one ought to yield a modest and peaceable Submission to their *Doctrine* too, until one perceives it to be *Erronious* or *Mistaken*, but no farther, for their *Authority* is not absolute; And since they are *fallible* Themselves, They cannot be a *Rule of Faith* to others, Nor is *Reason* to be blindly Resigned, but every Man has a Right to *Examine*, and 'tis his Duty to do so, and to *Reject* what he finds amiss, And this appears by the case of the *Sanhedrin*, who sat in *Moses Seat*, and had great *Authority*, and yet were the *Jews* condemned who *Obedied* Them, because it was in a Matter manifestly wrong, and so *Appearing* to their own *Reason*, in putting the *Innocent Jesus* to Death, who according to *Moses* and the *Prophets* was *Their Messiah*.

§ 45. By what has been said, it seems to me clear, That no other Church but *the Universal Church*, can have any Pretence to be *the Rule of Faith*; nor even *the Universal Church*, without these two Qualities. 1st. Of

Of being *Able* to give the Rule; And, 2dly. Of being *Infallible* in giving it.

§ 46. As to the former, *The Church Universal*, being the *diffusive Body of Christians* scattered throughout the World, It is impossible they should *meet*, to Agree in any *Rule of Faith*, or to Declare it, We must then have recourse to *Representatives*; but alas! *The Universal Church* is no more capable to meet to *choose Deputies*, than it is to *make Decrees*: Nor can any Representation be Authentick, unless *God Almighty* had Prescribed and Appointed it, for he will not Inspire whom *we please*, but whom *he pleases*; and there can be no *Infallibility* but from the Inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*: And without *Infallibility* there can be no *Rule of Faith*. So that the Universal Church fails in this first quality; for *it is not Able to give the Rule*: The whole Church cannot do it, and there is no Part or Representative of it *Appointed by God* that can. And so we come to the main Question.

Of the Infallibility of the Church.

§ 47. To clear this Important Point Methodically, I shall endeavour to shew. 1st. That it is highly *Improbable* that the Church should be *Infallible*. And, 2dly. That it is utterly *Impossible* it should be *Infallible*, unless

less every Member of it were inspir'd.

§ 48. To do this, We must 1st. dis-entangle our Selves from Equivocal Terms, and distinguish carefully, between the Words *Indefectible* and *Infallible*, for tho' they sound something like, yet they are as different, as *General* and *Particular*, *All* and *Some*: For to render the Catholick Church *Infallible*, *All* must agree, else we are at a Loss to know, *which* of the disagreeing parts is *Infallible*, But to render the Catholick Church *Indefectible*, 'tis enough, if but a *PART*, even a small part of it, continues in the profession of the *Necessary* and *Fundamental* Articles of Christianity, which was the Case at *Our Saviour's Passion*, when *His Disciples forsook him*, so that *Panormitan*, *Clemangis*, and other Popish Doctors, are of Opinion, *That the Church then remained only in the Blessed Virgin*, as it did afterwards in *Athanasius*, *Hillary*, and a very few more, as several learned Men have Imagined.

§ 49. It is Agreed, That the *Universal Church* is *Indefectible*; it shall never totally fail, *Christianity* shall never be wholly extinguish'd; but it may be *Eclips'd*, *Obscur'd*, and *Reduc'd very low*, as it was in the Days of *Arianism*, in the times of the *Ten-Persecutions*, and was, or will be in the Reign of *Antichrist*. Many Parts of the Church (and per-

perhaps the *whole*) may be Infested with gross Errors, as the *Corinthians* were in reference to the *Resurrection*, and the *Galatians*, concerning the *Mosaical Law*, and as most of the *Fathers* were, in respect to the *Millenary Opinion*; and some of them in reference to greater *Heresies*; and as the *Roman Church* was for many Years, in not owning the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and in giving the *Eucharist* to *Infants*, and as it still is, in the additional Articles of *Supremacy*, *Purgatory*, *Image-Worship*, *Transubstantiation*, &c. 'Tis true, That *G O D* has promised to protect the *Church* from the *World*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *Mat.* 24. 24. the *Flesh*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. and the *Devil*, *Heb.* 2. 14. Yet these promises Relate to its utter *Extirpation* and *Extinguishment* only; but do not hinder, but That the *Church* may be exposed to great *Tryals*, *Temptations*, and *Misfortunes*: It may be persecuted by the *World*, corrupted by the *Flesh*, and tempted by the *Devil*, to that degree, that *whole Churches* and *Nations* may *Apostatize*, and fall away entirely from the Faith: However the *Universal Church* shall not be destroyed, the *Gates of Hell* shall not so far prevail against it, *Matth.* 16. 18. On the contrary, its Blessed Saviour will be with the small *Remnant* that remains in the Faith to the *End of the World*, *Matth.* 28. 20. and

Guide

Guide them (his Church) *into all (Necessary) Truth*, Joh. 16. 13. and send the Spirit of Truth to remain with them (his Church) *for ever*, So that whatever Calamities the *Christian Church* may suffer, it shall never be *wholly destroyed*, there will still be a *Remnant* in all Ages, (tho' perhaps a small one, and obscure) who will profess the *Gospel of Christ* to Salvation, according to the Election of Grace; and which however scattered, or concealed, are truly call'd *The Church*, 2 Thes. 2. 3. Rom. 11. 5.

§ 50. If it be objected, That *the Church has failed*, unless it can be shewn, that there has been always a *Visible Church*, wherein there has been a Succession of *Bishops*, and the due Administration of the *Sacraments*, without disputing whether that *Historical* matter be *necessary*, It may be answer'd, That the *Greek church* has been always as *visible* as the *Roman*, and its Succession of *Bishops* less interrupted by *Schisme* or *Incapacity*; and that even the *Church of Rome*, whilst it owns *Jesus Christ*, and believes the *Scripture*, is sufficient to preserve the *Christian church* from extinguishment, notwithstanding her manifold *Errors* and *Superstitions*, and even her *Idolatry*; for as *That Sin* did not extinguish the *Jewish Church*, so neither do's it the *Christian*, altho' it dangerously corrupts it.

§ 51. And

§ 51. And the *Protestant Religion* is no more than a *Reformation* from those *Corruptions* and a *Reinfranchisement* of our selves, It retains the *Old Creeds*, and the *Old Christianity*, and all the *Essentials* of Religion in common with other *Christian Churches*; but it rejects all the *New Articles* of Superstition, Error, and Idolatry, Impos'd upon the Church by the *Additional Trent Creed* of Pope Pius 4. It separates the *Weeds* which have grown up with the *Corn*: It cures a loathsome *Disease* which a healthy Man had contracted: And as it would be foolish to demand, *Where was the Corn before it was weeded*, or, *Where was the Man before he was cured*? so it is ridiculous to ask, *Where was the Protestant Religion before Luther*? for it was at *Rome*, and at *Constantinople*, before these Innovations, nay, It is still there, for they are all *Christians*, and of the same *Christian Church*, and *their Errors do not unchurch them*, and consequently not make them of a *different Religion*; and if they are not of the same *Communion*, it is not necessary they shou'd, and the fault of the *Schisme* will depend, upon the *Verity* and *Necessity* of the *New Popish Articles*, and the *Authority* of the *Church of Rome* to Impose Them.

§ 52 This

§ 53. This being premised, That we may not be Impos'd upon, by confounding the Terms, or by Sophistical Application of the Texts, which promise the *Indefectibility* or perpetual duration of the Church, to prove the *Infallibility* of it; One may boldly say, That it is highly *Improbable*, That the Church should be *Infallible*.

§ 54. First, because it is no where promised in Scripture, that the Church should be *Infallible*; which wou'd certainly have been done, and done plainly and expressly, if God Almighty had intended That it shou'd be our *Rule of Faith*.

§ 55. Secondly, Because that Quality of *Infallibility* in the *Universal Church* cou'd be of no manner of use, for it cou'd never be exercised; for as has been said, The whole Church cou'd never meet, to make a Decree, or to choose Representatives, or to make their Sentiments known in any Thing. Besides, either All of them must agree or not, If All are Agreed, there is no need nor use of a Decree; If All do not Agree, but Arius, or Liberius, or Luther Dissent, They have no more Authority to call Him Heretick, than he has to call Them so; for it does not go by telling of Noses, and the Promise (if any) not being to any part but to the whole, Number can make no difference in the Merit of the Cause, else

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the *Arians* had carried it long ago : When They were so *Numerous*, and the *Orthodox* so few, that *St. Hierome* complain'd That the whole World was *Arian*.

§ 56. Thirdly, This Priviledge of *Infal-*
libility in the Church could be of no use to Christians, unless it cou'd appear clearer to Them than the Points in Dispute, that are to be decided by her *Authority*. For Example, If the *Infalibility* of the Church shou'd govern me to believe *Transubstantiation*, Is it not necessary, That the *evidence* of that *Infalibility* should be more clear or more weighty than the *Objections* against *Transubstantiation*? Else, If I act as a Rational Creature, I must reject the *Pretence of Infal-*
libility, which is *Obscure* and doubtful, and own the *Absurdity of Transubstantiation*, because it is *Evident*?

§ 57. Fourthly, the *Infalibility* of the Church can be of no use, unless we knew where to fix it and find it, that we might have recourse to it upon Occasion ; for all the Arguments drawn from the *Goodness of God*, in giving us a *Living Infalible Judge*, are overturned, and of no effect, unless it be plainly Revealed to us, *Who that Infal-*
ible Judge is, and *where he is to be found*, and *that he be always extant*, that we may consult him in cases of difficulty, for manifestly it is *no favour* to us, nor of *any use* to us,
That

That such an *Authority* is appointed, unless we are also Instructed, *where it resides*, and where to find it; and if it be in any *particular Church or Office*, 'tis necessary discover *that Church*, and so to describe the *proper Officer*, that in cases of *Schism*, we may be plainly directed to whom to adhere, otherwise *Mankind* can receive no benefit by it, but will (as they now do) eternally wrangle, as much about the *Seat of Infallibility*, and the *proper Judge*, as they do about the other Points in Controversy: So that instead of deciding any Dispute, It only adds one disputable Point more to the number.

§ 58. It is exceeding Plain, that this pretended *Infallibility* was never exercis'd since the *Apostles Days*, for if it were, we should hear by *whom*, and that would have fixed it so, That both the *Primitive Christians* would have had Recourse to it, to Reconcile their differences, and the *Present Age* would know where to find it: But 'tis so far from That, that the *Papists* themselves are Bewildred in their Search after the *Infallibility*, and contend fiercely about it, being Divided into *Three several Opinions*, as shall be shewn hereafter.

§ 59. Fifthly, The *Infallibility* of the *Catholick Church* is deemed very *Improbable*, from the *Ignorance and Infirmity of Humane Nature* even after *Conversion*, for the

Church Militant is not perfect, and as the Apostle says, *We know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 9. and as the Psalmist says, *We have all Errors*, Psal. 19. 3. And sure we cannot pretend to *Infallibility* but by *Inspiration*, and can as little pretend to *Inspiration*, without shewing such *Effects* of it, as may *Convince the World*, *That we are inspired*.

§ 60. Sixthly, (If the *Universal Church* were *Infallible*, There could be no Apostacy amongst Christians, but *whole Churches* have Apostatiz'd, and even the *Church of Rome* may do so, for she is not Threatned in vain, *Rom. 11. 22.* She has been vexed with many *Schisms* already, and is much Abused, if she be not Infected with *Heresy* and *Idolatry* too.

§ 61. Lastly, Experience in all Ages may convince Us, *That all sorts of Men have Err'd*, and some of them grossly. Our first Parents err'd in *Paradise*; *Aaron* and the *Israelites* err'd to *Idolatry*. The Judges err'd; and so did the Kings, viz. *David*, *Solomon*, &c. The Prophets likewise err'd; and so did both the Priests and People: even The whole Colledge, *Joh. 11. 53.* The Sanhedrin who sat in *Moses Seat*: And so did *St. Peter* err in denying his Saviour, and when *St. Paul* withstood him to the Face, *Gal. 2. 11.* The Patriarchs err'd when at the same time all the five were *Arians*, viz. *Liberius* Bishop

Rom. 16. 17.

Exod. 32. 4.

Judg. 2.

1 King. 22. 6.

Jer. 23. 11.

Hosea. 6. 9.

1 King. 21.

11.

Mat. 26. 65.

Bishop of Rome, Cyril Bishop of Jerusalem, George Bishop of Alexandria, Miletius Bishop of Antioch, and Bishop of Constantinople? and so have the Fathers, Popes and Councils very often Erred, as shall be shewn hereafter: All which Instances render it very Improbable, That the Church should be Infallible, So that no body should say, it is, unless he could produce clear Evidence to prove it; and that is incumbent upon the Papists to do, for the proof lies upon them who assert the Thing.

§ 62. But alas, how will they prove it, or what do they know of the matter: when (as I said before) The Church of Rome is divided into Three Opinions about it.

§ 63. The first and fairest Opinion places the Infallibility in the Church diffusive; which is truly the Universal Church; and if Infallibility were in the Church, it would be there: But alas! it is very plain, That it is not there, and that Infallibility would be an useless Quality in the Church diffusive, for all could never meet, and less than All would not be the whole Church; and therefore could not have that Priviledge.

§ 64. The Second Opinion, which is Jesuitical, and the worst of all is, That the Infallibility resides in the Pope. And how groundless soever this may be, yet it seems to me, that one cannot be a Papist upon any

oabler Principle : For unless the *Supremacy* and *Infallibility* go together, *That Communion* will be very *dangerous* ; And it is manifest *Prevarication*, to *Insist* upon *St. Peters Prerogatives* and *Intitle* the *Pope* to *Them*, as his *Succeffor*, so as to make the *Pope Vicar of Christ*, *Head of the Church*, *Center of Unity*, and *Judge of Controversies*, and then strip him of the *proper Quality* to discharge those *Functions* ; for if he be not *Infallible*, he may *Err*, and may lead the whole *Church* astray. And if the *Pope* be not *Infallible*, the *Church of Rome* cannot be *Infallible*, because *she* has no pretence to it, but upon the *Pope's* account, and as he is suppos'd the *Succeffor of St. Peter* ; so that the *Opinion of the Popes Infallibility*, at first sight seems most *plausible*, and would certainly *prevail*, but that it unluckily happens to have *Demonstration* against it.

§ 65. For the *Errors* of *Popes* are *Innumerable*, not only in *Faith*, but in *Manners* ; some of *them* have been *The Wickedest Creatures upon Earth*, and one must have a strong *Fancy* to imagine, That the *Holy Jesus* did *Appoint* *such* for his *Vicars* and *Deputies* to *Guide* his *Church*, without *trouble*, and without *Appeal* ; But at this time, we are concern'd only as to *Doctrine*, wherein *St. Cyprian* thought, that the *Pope* might be *mistaken* : *Our Brother Stephen* (says

(says he) *endeavours to maintain the cause of Hereticks against Christians and the Church of God*; which shews what Opinion he had in the matter; and tho' it seems that they were both in the wong, about *Re-baptization*, and that the *Right* lay between the *extreams*, yet that do's but confirm my Assertion, *That both Popes and Fathers were Fallible.*

§ 66. In like manner St. *Ireneus* differed from Pope *Victor*, who had rashly Excommunicated *The Eastern Churches*, for not Celebrating *Easter at his Time*, So St. *Polycarp* dissented from Pope *Eleutherius*, as St. *Hillary* and *Athanasius* did from Pope *Liberius*, and *The African Illyrian and Dalmatian Churches* renounced Communion with Pope *Vigilius*, for condemning the *Tria Capitula*, which were *Nonsense*, or downright *Madness*, if those *Holy Fathers* had thought *The Pope Infallible*, or *The Roman Communion to be necessary to Salvation.*

§ 67. But this Point will not bear a Dispute, for the *Errors of Popes* have manifestly appeared, not only in their *Private Conduct*, but also in their *Judicial Decrees*, Teaching the Church *ex Cathedra*: For as *Occham* confesses, *Multa sunt decretales Hereticae*; and *Alphonsus a Castro* owns, *That Celestin err'd*, not as a *private Person*, but as a *Pope.*

Coriolanus.
264.

Hill in frag.
426.

§ 68. Certainly *Liberius* err'd as a Pope in his Condemnation of the Orthodox and Holy *Athenasius*, and in holding Communion with the *Eastern Arians* (*cum Orientalibus*) for which *St. Hilary* declares that Pope *Curfed* and *Anathematized*.

§ 69. So did Pope *Siricius* and *Innocent* 1. in applying, 1 *Pet.* 1. 16. and *Rom.* 8. 8. to the Prohibition, of the *Marriage of the Clergy*.

§ 70. So did Pope *Vigilius*, when Teaching the Church, in matters of Faith, he contradicted himself, in the Case of the *Tria Capitula*: For first he *Condemned*, and afterwards *Approved*, of the *Fifth General Council*.

§ 71. And so did Pope *Honorius* err, for he was a *Monothelite*, and as such condemned by Pope *Agatho*, and is declared an *Heretick* by the *Sixth, Seventh and Eighth General Councils*, which no *Sophistry* is artful enough to clear him of, says *Cardinal Camus*.

§ 72. And so did Pope *Stephen*, in Solemnly condemning the Acts of his Predecessor *Formosus*; for Pope *Romanus* Abrogated his, and *John* 10. revived the Acts of *Formosus*, but Pope *Sergius* acted quite contrary, even to the *Reordination* of those Ordained by *Formosus*, and this is *The Steadiness and Infallibility of the Popes of Rome*.

§ 73. In

§. 73. In like manner Pope Martin V. published a Bull against *Appeals* to a General Council, (which by the by, is a denial of *Justice*) and yet he confirmed the Council of *Constance*, which (by subjecting Popes to Councils) is *Inconsistent* with that Bull.

§ 74. So did Pope Gelasius forbid *Communian* in one kind as a *Sacrilege*, and yet it is (since the Council of *Constance*) the common practice of the Church of Rome, and an established Article in the Council of *Trent*: And so did Pope Pelagious II. and Gregory the 1st declaim against the *Supremacy*, and condemned the Title of *Universal Bishop* as *Arrogant* and *Anti-christian*, tho' it be now *The main and fundamental Article of Popery*. Gratian de
conf. c. 12.

§ 75. And surely One of the Popes err'd egregiously, when Sixtus V. in *Cathedra*, damned all other Copies or Translations of the Bible that differ'd from his, and afterwards Clement VIII. put out a very different Edition, and Damns all Those who use any other, So that Poor Catholics are under a *Sad Dilemma*, of being damn'd either way, unless Popes may Err even when They are Teaching *The Church ex Cathedra*. Greg. Mag.
l. 6. Epist.
30.

§ 76. But it seems to me, that the most dangerous Error of Popes is, when they mistake in *Canonizing* Saints: For the Saints are an Object of Worship and Devotion in the Church of Rome. And yet it is

is very plain, that some *Turbulent Traytors* have been *Sainted*, for siding with the *Pope* against their *own Prince and Country*, and and some for *Crimes* more *Wicked and Abominable*, and that, *Others* are *Worshipped* that are but *Mock-Saints*, and were never in the *World* at all: As *St. Longinus*, *St. Amphiabalus*, *St. Christopher*, *St. Ursula* and her *Eleven Thousand Virgins*, the *Seven Sleepers*, the *Three Kings of Cologne*, *St. Mauritius*, The *Thebean Legion*, and many more.

§ 77. But I need not labour to prove, That *Popes may Err*, because the wisest *Pa-pists* do not deny, but that the *Pope may be a Heretick*, and may be *depos'd*, as in *Fact* some of them were, and with very scandalous *Circumstances* too, For the *Council of Constance* *Depos'd John 23.* for a vast *Number of Crimes* which were *Notorious*, or *Prov'd by Witnesses*, and submitted to by himself, as *Lewdness*, *Simony*, *Incest*, *Adultery*, *Poysoning his Predecessor*, and a *Thousand and a Thousand cheats*, says a *Doctor of the * Sorbon*. And in like manner, The *Council of Basil* *deposed Eugenius* the 4th. as one giving open *Scandal* to the *whole Church*, *Symoniacal*, *Perjur'd*, *Incorrigible*, *Schismatical*, *Heretical*, and unworthy of all *Title Degree of Honour and Dignity*: And if it be *Replied*, That these *Popes* were

* D² Pin. 15.
Century.
Pag. 17.

Du Pin. ib.
id 50.

were rather guilty of *Immorality* than *Heresy*, We need go no farther, even for Instances of *that sort*, then to Pope *Marcellinus* who Sacrificed to *Idols*, and *St. Felix* who was a Perjur'd *Arian*, and *John* the 22d, who denyed the *Immortality of the Soul*; and to *Leo* the 10th, and that Monster of Mankind *Alexander* the 6th, and several other *Popes*, who were meer *Atheists*, and did not believe one word of the *Gospel* at all: So that it is evident beyond contradiction, that the *Infallibility* do's not Reside in the *Pope*.

§ 78. And so We are come to the *Third* and most politick Opinion, which places the *Infallibility* in the *Church Representative*, viz. A *General Council*, but that being a matter purely of *Human Invention*, (for both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had their *Councils*, *Sanhedrims*, *Senates*, and *Parliaments*, before Christianity) the *Papists* are perplexed in every point of this Absurdity, for (not being of *Divine Institution*) 'tis impossible to prove its *Infallibility* by *Scripture*, and much less by *Tradition*, because, there was no *General Council* for the first *Three hundred years*: So that it seems an unaccountable Whim, to fancy that it is *Infallible*. They are also at a loss, *Who should call it*, for it would be a vain *Prerogative* in the *Pope*, since the *Bishops* could not meet without the consent of

of their respective *Princes*; and therefore there was no *General Council* until the *Emperor* became *Christian*; and the *Emperors* (and not the *Popes*) Indicted the first Eight *General Councils*. They also wrangle, who shall *Vote* in it; for it seems very unreasonable, and contrary to *Primitive practice*, That *Priests* and *Elders* should be excluded, and *Abbots* and *Cardinals* (tho' but *Deacons*) admitted. But the greatest difficulty of all, arises from the plain consequence of a *Council* being above the *Pope*, if the *Council* be a *Representative* of the *Catholick Church*, And so it was Decreed and practised in the *Councils* of *Constance* and *Basle*, even to the deposing of *Popes*: But this would be fatal to the *Papal Supremacy*; and therefore they save it as well as they can, by making the *Pope* an *Essential* part of the *Council*, and placing the *Infallibility* in *Pope* and *Council*, without any *Warrant* or *Authority* from *Christ* so to do, By which *Artifice*, they put the greater *Difficulty* upon their *Adversaries* to shew, that *Popes* and *Councils* have *Erred* together, and in effect, do establish the *Infallibility* in the *Pope*.

§ 79. For the *Council* have done their work when they have made their *Decrees*, and either the *Holy Ghost* did *Assist* them, or he did not; If he did, then are They *Judges*, and the *Decree* is *Right*? with-

out farther Sanction, and as it cannot be Reversed or Avoided, So neither can it be made better, and therefore needs no Confirmation: And if the Holy Ghost did not Assist them, they are but like a Grand-Jury, and their Presentment may be confirmed or rejected by the Judge, and if confirmed, may be of some Authority, but never of any Infallibility; And if the confirmation could produce Infallibility, 'tis plain that the Infallibility must Reside in the Pope, and not in the Council.

§ 80. But really they do but banter, if they pretend that the Council has any extraordinary Assistance of the Holy Ghost, since the Popes confirm some, and Reprobate other Acts of The same Council, as if they were assisted half way; and then forsaken, which tho' horrid to Imagine, is not only the consequence of that practice, but also infer thus much farther, That the Inspiration and Infallibility resides in the Pope, who is thereby enabled to discern (what the Council could not) how far the Holy Ghost assisted the Council, and wherein he forsook it.

Bull de
Rom. Pont.
l. 4. c. 3.

§ 81. But as this is the Sheet Anchor of Popery, and its last Refuge, and the main pretence of many Ingenious Gentlemen, who plainly perceive the Absurdity of several of the Popish Articles, and yet shelter them-

themselves in that *Communion*, under the specious Titles of *The Definitions of a General Council*; and the *Infallibility of the Catholick Church*; We ought not to grudge a little time and pains, to set this matter in a true light, if we can.

§ 82. And it seems to me no difficult Task, to countermine *Poper*y in this matter, if, as *They* perplex this affair by *confounding different things together*, So we lay it open, by making necessary and substantial *distinctions*, and shewing plainly, where the difference lyes, and verifying the Rule, *Qui bene distinguit, bene docet*.

§ 83. I have already shewn the difference, between the *Indefectibility* and *Infallibility* of the *Church*; and tho' its certain, that the *Universal Church* is *Indefectible*, that is, some part of it shall have perpetual Duration, yet 'tis is not true, that even the *Universal Church* is *Infallible*; nay, 'tis demonstration, That whilst there is any *difference* in Opinion among Christians, the *whole Church* is not of any *one Opinion* in that Point, but *part* is for it, and *part* against it, and where the Parts are divided *pro* and *con*, one *part* must be in the *wrong*, and consequently the *whole* cannot be *Infallible*.

§ 84. 2dly. We must distinguish between the *whole* and a *part*, for it is a manifest fallacy, to apply to any *part* what is promised

ed to the *whole*, and it wou'd administer Occasion of eternal wrangles between the *parts*, which of Them were best intituled to the *promise* ; So that supposing, that *Infallibility* were promis'd to the *whole Church* ; yet it wou'd be unsufferable Arrogance, and extreme Folly, in any *Part*, *Sect*, or *Communion*, of Christians, to appropriate this privilege to *it self* ; and 'tis yet more silly, to fancy, that a *majority*, or a casting Vote, that may be purchas'd with *Money*, or be misguided by *Passion* or *Ignorance*, shou'd have the sole exercise of this *Divine Prerogative*.

§ 85. 3dly. We must distinguish between the *Church*, and a *Representative of the Church* ; for the *Church* is the People themselves, *all the Christian People*, the *whole Society of Christians* ; but a *Representative* of the *Church* is only a *Deputation*, chosen or appointed to act for them.

§ 86. But surely, this *Deputation* must be made by themselves, every *Christian* at least every *Clergyman* in the *World*, should have his Vote in the Election ; for no Body can choose another to represent *me*, without my consent, unless *God Almighty* had so appointed it. And if there were such a *full Representative* of the *Catholick Church*, yet unless *God Almighty* had so prescribed, it would not be intituled to the *Infallibility* pro-

promis'd to the *Universal Church*, for he will not Inspire whom *we* please, but whom *He* pleases; so that the *subject* must be *suitable* to his *promise*, and not his promise *wrested* to the *subject* according to our fancy, if we wou'd Intitle it to *Infallibility*.

§ 87. 4thly. We must distinguish between *Infallibility* and *Authority*; for to give a Council *Authority*, it is sufficient that (like other *Humane* Institutions) it be conformable to the Rules and Laws of the *Society*; but to give it *Infallibility*, it must conform to the Rules prescribed by the *Holy Ghost*, and intitle it self by the *Promise* or Institution of *God*,

§ 88. And accordingly all Men allow, that *Diocesan* and *Provincial Councils*, and even *Lay Assemblies*, *Senates*, and *Parliaments*, have *Authority*, and yet they have not *Infallibility*, which shews the Error of those, who compare *General Councils* to *Parliaments*, and Infer, that as the *Royal Assent* is absolutely necessary to give *Sanction* to an Act of Parliament; so the *Popes's Confirmation* (which is a trick of a late Invention to make The Pope Judge in *his own cause*) is necessary to render the decrees of a *General Council* Authentick; for *Parliaments* are of *Humane* contrivance, and are molded according to the Laws of their *Institution*, which may appoint *one* Man to Vote for *another*,

another, and may vest a *Negative Voice* where they please ; and after all, they are but of *Humane Authority*, and consequently may *Err* ; but *General Councils* pretend to a *Divine Original*, and therefore shou'd shew a *Divine Commission*, and tell us, what *Law of God* it is, that qualifies *one* to *Vote* for another, or *Impowers* the *Pope* to *reject* what seems good to the *Holy Ghost* and to *them*, or that makes the *Pope's Confirmation* necessary, to *Authenticate* what the *Holy Ghost* has dictated to the *Council* ; for it looks like exalting the *Pope* above all that is called *God* : 2 Thes. 2. 4. And it is manifest, that if the *Council* have *Err'd*, the *Popes confirmation* can't mend the matter ; and if it be the *Pope's* part to distinguish the *right* from the *wrong*, the *Infallibility* lies in *him*, and not in the *Council* ; but at the same time, it will be *Blasphemy* to affirm, that the *Holy Ghost* guided that *Assembly*, where any *material Point* was determin'd *wrong*, or, where two different *Creeds* were establish'd, as in the *Council of Sirmium*. Coriolanus de Concil. partim approbatur.

§ 89. 5ly, We must distinguish between *Faith* and *Discipline*, for not only *Councils* and *Synods*, but even *Christian Senates* and *Parliaments*, have full *Power* and *Authority*, in *Rites*, *Ceremonies*, and other matters of *Discipline*, not contrary to the *Law of God*, to order them as they please, for *decency* and *Edifi-*

Edification; but none of them have any *Authority* to add or alter an Article of Faith, for that were to preach a *New Gospel*, which, whoever do's, is accurs'd: No, nor even to explain it, so as to oblige any Man's Conscience farther, than to Modesty and Respect, and not to disturb the Society by contradiction, nor that neither, where the *Explanation* is plainly contrary to the *Scripture*; for if there were an Act of Parliament made to Legitimate *Idolatry*, and Establish *Transubstantiation*, it would nevertheless be a damnable Sin; and if there were a Statute made against *Christianity*, it wou'd nevertheless be the duty of every *Christian* to promote, and of every *Clergyman* to preach the Gospel, *Vae mihi si non Evangelizavero.* W

§ 90. 6thly. We should distinguish between *National Councils* and *General Councils*, for if the Bishops or Clergy of two or three, or of twenty Nations, should meet together in a Synod, as if the Clergy of the *British Dominions* shou'd Assemble at London, or all the *Protestants* of Europe at *Ausburgh* or *Dort*, or all the *Papists* at *Trent*, or all the *Greek Church* at *Constantinople*, yet neither of these wou'd amount to a *General Council*; they may be stiled *Plenary Councils*, but not *General*; for to Constitute a *General Council*, It seems necessary, that there should be an *Universal Monarchy* in the State, as well

well as in the Church, else the Bishops might be hindred by their Respective Princes from Appearing, and it is beyond Controversy, that all the Bishops in the World (not hindred by a lawful Impediment) ought to be at a Truly General Council, at least, there should be some Representative from every Nation, and indeed from every Diocess, Who should be able to bring the Sentiments of their Respective Countries and Churches, But whether they could Come or not, They ought to be summoned, *Sonus ejus exire debet in Omnem Terram*: and it must not be a sham Summons, like the Cham of Tartary, who after He has dined, orders his Trumpeter to sound a License to all other Kings in the World to go to dinner: but it must be an effectual Summons, such as may give them Notice, and Protection, which was never yet done, and is morally Impossible to be done, especially if Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks, as John Hus found to his Cost, and yet without such Summons, The Council cannot be General, and without such Safeguard, it cannot be free.

§ 91. Moreover, it seems necessary to a truly General Council, that some of all the disagreeing Parties should be there, and be patiently heard, and that the Matter should be fairly examined, and fully Understood, before any Person be Condemn'd, or his Do-

Generalia dicuntur ea, quibus interesse possunt & debent Episcopi totius orbis nisi, &c. Bellar. 10. Richerius 9.

Rom. 10. 8.

Concil. Constant. Sess. 19.

Etine decreed *Heretical*, and therefore since *These Cautions* have never been observ'd, and that most of the *Councils* called *General* consisted but of a few *Bishops*, in comparison with the Number of those which were absent, One may venture to say: That A *General Council* is but an *Hyperbolical expression*, favouring more of *Ostentation* than *Reality*, both in *Name* and *Thing*.

§ 92. As for the *Name* (*General* or *Oecumenical*) it was first *Synodically* assum'd in the middle of the *fifth Century*, at the *Council of Chalcedon*, and the *Novelty* of the *Name* shews that there was no great stress laid upon that *Word*, which was well enough understood, rather to be *Complemental* than *True*, else it had been Used from the beginning: But it was suitable to the *Pride* of the *Romans*, to call their *Empire* *The whole World*; and it naturally follow'd, That a *Council of the Empire*, might be *Styled*, A *Council of the whole World*, or *Oecumenical*, altho' in truth it had no more *Authority* to bind the *whole World*, nor in fact did any more Represent it, than the *Synod of Dort*: Nevertheless, it is not to be wonder'd at, that the same stretch of Compliment, which gave the *Titles* of *Sanctity*, *Holiness*, and *Blessedness*, to the *Prelates*, how *Wicked* so ever some of them might be, shou'd also give to the *whole Assembly*, The pompous *Tit*
tle

tle of *Oecumenical*; and 'tis plain, that their Flattery was strained so high, that the Title of *Oecumenical* or *General* was given, not only to *Eastern Councils*, where there was not either the *Pope* or his *Legates*, or so much as one *Western Bishop* at all, as in the first *Council of Constantinople* (which is reputed the *Second General Council*) but even to a *National Council of Italy*, held at *Rome*, and a *Council of Spain*, held at *Toledo*, and after this example, to a *Council of a few Nations* held at *Trent*, which was open'd with but *Twenty five Bishops*, whereof but *One* was from *Germany*, and *two* from *France*, and was afterwards supply'd by *Mercenary Italians*, many of which were meerly *Titular*, *Episcopi Nullatenfes*, *Bishops of Utopia*; and even so it self, there were not above *Fifty* in all, when they made their *Erroneous Decree*, in favour of *Oral Tradition* and *Apocrypha*.

Binius 31.
Bellar. 30.

§ 93. And as to the Thing, it seems utterly *Impossible*, that there can be such a Thing in the World as a *truly General Council*, at least it has not been hitherto, and indeed it is ridiculous, to fancy that the *Bishops of six or seven Countries* can make a *General Council*, or truly represent all *Christians*, even such as differ from them, and protest against Them, and this is so Plain and Manifest, that no body can be deceived by the *flimsy Pretences*

Pretences of Popery in this Matter, but He that for Interest is willing to be deceived, or through prejudice of Education Resolves to be Stubborn.

§ 94. Besides, when two Councils sat together, as the Council of Lateran and the Council of Pisa, and acted in Opposition to one another, Wou'd not Christians be distracted which to obey, but that it is manifest, That neither of them was a General Council, or fully Represented the Universal Church? So, that it is not the only Question, Whether the Church fully represented be Infallible, but also, whether a part of the Church summon'd by the Emperor or the Pope to meet together, be a full and legal Representative of the whole Church, and whether such an Assembly approv'd by the Pope be Infallible.

§ 95. 7thly. We must distinguish between the usefulness and necessity of Councils, for if General Councils are of Christs Institution, and to be the Rule of our Faith, then they are absolutely necessary: But 'tis own'd even by Bellarmine, that Councils are not simply necessary, and he gives an unanswerable Reason for it, because the Church was without them for Three hundred Years; and consequently might be for Three thousand, and is now like to be so to the End of the World. But sure this Concession gives up the Point; for

for a *Rule of Faith* is always and constantly necessary; and if a *Council* is not necessary, it can be no *Rule of Faith*, Besides, *Councils* cannot be Necessary, nor indeed very useful, unless their *Canons* were more certainly transmitted to us than they are, for in the World there is not such a pack of forged silly stuff, as in the *Tomes* of the *Councils*; and so *Richerius* (a learned Papist) confesses, *Nullos extare libros in quibus tot tantaq; fictitia* Richer. 18.
& Adulterina Scripta quam in Tomis Conciliorum leguntur, and even *Bellarmino* owns, that the *Books* of the *Councils* are negligently kept, and are full of Errors: *Libri Conciliorum* (says he) *negligenter Conservati sunt, & multis vitiis foetent*, and I add, that Bellar. 29.
 there is not any circumstance so minute, relating to *Councils*, but that the *Schoolmen* differ, and even wrangle about it, the *Indiction*, the *Time*, the *Number*, the *President*, the *Popes*, the *Patriarchs*, the *Legates*, the *Canons*, and even the very *Councils* themselves (as *Synveffa*, *Tralla*, *Cologne*, &c.) are not only doubtful, but perpetual Articles of Contention among the Learned; so that *Bellarmino* himself confesseth, That their Discord is wonderful, *Mira est eorum varietas*, says he, and he gives the true reason of it, viz. The disagreement of Writers, *propter Scriptorum discrepantium sententias*, Pag. 32.
 or the Uncertainty of Traditions: And yet he

he would have these dubious Uncertain Traditions pass for the Rule of Faith. And it is to be noted, That as The Emperor Called, Govern'd, and Confirm'd, General Councils heretofore, and maintained most of The Bishops, and consequently so Influenc'd Them, That Their Decrees were suitable to his Sentiment, So that as *Arian Emperors* had numerous Councils (and even Popes too, as *Liberius*, and *St. Felix*) which by *Solemn Decree* Complimented Their Opinion, So Popes now assume all that and more, and have so entirely Ingross'd the Power of Councils, that it is morally impossible to have any good effect of them, or that They should Decree but as the Pope pleases, for he can detach *Titular Bishops* enough, to out-vote the rest, and actually had 187 *Italian Prelates* at *Trent*, where all the other Bishops amounted but to 83.

§ 96. However, as to the usefulness of Councils, tho' *Gregory Nazianzen* said, he never knew good come of any of them; and in the Council of *Constance* it was said, that they were unnecessary; (*minus Necessaria*) and tho' it is certain, that in several of them, there was as much Faction, Rudeness, Error, Contradiction and Impertinence, as in any other Assemblies in the World: So that 'tis to be feared, That another Spirit had a party in some of them, against the Holy Ghost; and tho' it

it do's not appear to me that the *Authority* of a *General Council* has been able to suppress so much as *One* *heresy*, for there were *Arians* and *Nestorians* in abundance after the *Councils* of *Nice* and *Ephesus*, which shews that *General Councils* were not then thought *Infallible*: Yet I will not say, but that they may be of use, as to the *Discipline* of the Church, and may be like *Parliaments* in a State, often *useful*, some times *pernicious*, but never *Infallible*.

§ 97. But, to proceed, from these just distinctions already made, we may conclude, 1. That the *Universal Church*, tho' *Indefectible* is not *Infallible*. 2. That supposing the *Universal Church* were *Infallible*, yet neither the *Roman Church*, nor any other *Part*, *Sect*, or *Communion* of the *Universal Church* is *Infallible*. 3dly. That tho' the *Church* were *Infallible*, yet a *Representative* of the Church can't be so, unless *God Almighty* had so *Appointed* it, which do's not yet appear, and I suppose never will. 4thly, That tho' a *Council*, *General*, *National*, *Provincial*, or *Diocesan*, may be of great *Authority*, yet by no means do's that infer *Infallibility*, any more than in a *Parliament*. 5thly, That whatever *Authority* the *Church* has in *Discipline*, *Rites*, and *Ceremonies*, which is certainly very great, yet she has none to *Innovate* in points

points of Faith, no not to make *Explanations*, but *Such* as are consonant to the *Holy Scriptures*, for the matters of Faith were once Settled by the *Holy Ghost*, and cannot be altered from what was then delivered to *The Saints*, So that the *Authority* of the Church can extend no farther than to make *True Interpretation* of what *The Inspir'd Persons* wrote, but it cannot be *True*, if it be contrary to any part of *Scripture*, or to what the same *Inspired Persons* have written elsewhere in the *Bible* : In short, *The Authority* of *The Church our Mother*, is much like that of a *Father*, in points of Faith, and is not *Absolute*, but *Qualified*, and Centers rather in *Council* and *Instruction* than *Precept*, Which every Good and Wise Man will Reverence and highly esteem, unless He Perceives it to be contrary to *Scripture*, and then, He *Should*, and He *Will*, prefer *The Council of God* before it.

§ 99. 6thly, That there never was nor possibly can be a *Council* truly *General* ; the most *plenary* Councils that have been were but *National*, and those most famous, consisted but of the Subjects of *One Prince* (*The Emperor*) and not half of them neither ; for in the first Council of *Nice* there were but *Five Western Bishops*, and in the First Council of *Constantinople* not one : So that if those Councils were *infallible*, then were the

Greek

Greek Fathers not only Representatives, but Guides of the Latin Church.

§ 100. 7thly, That General Councils (so called) are not Instituted by God, since they are not *absolutely Necessary*, and by the Ill Management of them, are now become very little if at all *Useful*.

§ 101. And lastly, That the whole design of their applauding Councils, is to place the *Infallibility* in the Pope, who by the Bull of Pius IV. prohibiting all others to explain the decrees of Councils, has appropriated that *sweet Prerogative* to himself, and accordingly Coriolanus 43. determines; *Quod Papa solus absq; concilio in rebus fidei determinare & discernere potest*; and if the Pope and the General Council differ in matter of Faith, the Judgment of the Pope and Cardinals is to be prefer'd before the Definitions of the General Council, *ibid.* for that is (as he thinks) The Judgment of the Catholic Church.

§ 102. But *quid verbis opus est, Spectemur agendo*; let us lay aside Arguments, and come to matter of Fact, for that is *infalibly convincing*, and 'tis Demonstration That Councils are not *Infallible*, if we can shew that They have Erred, And to shew that, I shall Instance only such Councils as the Papists own to have Erred, as, 1. St. Cyprian and the Third Council of Carthage, which

Binius 149.
in Margine.

Bell. de i.
magin. lib.
2. cap. 9.

which (they say) Err'd grossly in a high point of Faith, in opposing the Popes Supremacy, (which one would think should destroy Cyprians Saintship, and the Tradition of that Supremacy) 2dly, The Council of Eliberis, Ann 305. In the 36th Canon, which forbids Pictures to be plac'd in Churches, least the Object of our Worship and Adoration should be painted on the Walls, and therein Err'd, and the more, because this Canon entirely destroys the Tradition of Image Worship, which was nevertheless affirm'd in the Second Council of Nice.

Bell de
Rom. Pont
l. 2. c. 17.

§ 103. 3dly, The General Council of Chalcedon Err'd, in founding the Supremacy on the Capital City, and therefore Pope Leo who confirmed the rest of it's Decrees, Rejected That. And 4thly, So did the 6th 7th. and 8th. General Councils which condemned Pope Honorius for a Heretick: Bell. thinks they were deceived by false Reports, and it may be so, but deceived they were, and Err They did. And 5thly, So did the 7th, and 8th General Councils in derogating from the Supremacy, by their Levelling Decree, that Those Excommunicated by other Bishops should not be Absolv'd by the Pope; and so 6thly, did the Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, in deposing Popes,

Bell. de
Conc. l. 2.
c. 12.

Binius 155.

for that is Inconsistent with the Supremacy to have any thing Superior to it. And lastly,

ly, so did the Council of Rome under Nicho.
2. Anno. 1059. when it decreed That
*Christ's Body in the Sacrament is chewed with
the Teeth of the Faithful*, for that is a little
too gross, and is by themselves reckon'd
Herefy now.

§ 104. And it matters not, whether the
aforesaid Errors were Real or Imaginary,
nay it is plain, that most of them are not
Errors, but the Popes were mistaken in re-
jecting them as Errors, however they are
Rejected and Disown'd by the Church of
Rome, and those Councils are in the aforesaid
Points generally Reckon'd by the Papists
as Erronious, which shews that they do
not think that Councils are Assisted by the
Holy Ghost, or Infallible in Themselves, but
that the whole Virtue lies in the Infallibility
of the Pope, which tho' some are asham'd
to own plainly, yet is the drift of all they
say about General Councils: And therefore
They who venture to speak out, tell us,
That even Provincial and Particular Councils,
if Appov'd of by the Pope are Infallible, And
of this Opinion is the famous Gregory de Va-
lencia, *Accedente Romani Pontificis confirmatio-
ne, Concilium quodvis est Infallibile* (says he)
and the Angelical Doctor St. Thomas goes a
step farther, saying, that it belongs to the
Pope finally to determine matters of Faith, and
to his Authority only to make a New Creed; so
that

Bellar. l. 2.
c. 5. Binius.
313.

Tom. 3.
disp. 1. ff.
45.

Aquinas.
2a. 2e.
pag. 6.

Eorum
firmitas fere
pendet ex
firmitate
Pontificis.
Bellar.

that the virtue of Councils lies in the Popes *Approbation*, whereby it is evident that such *Councils* are of little or *no Use* to the *Church*, where Things are Manag'd by *Directions from Rome*, and all must at last Center, and be Resolv'd into the *Infallibility of the Pope*.

§ 105. And so having seen, that Popes may Err, and Councils may Err, we come to the Legerdemain of making out of these two *Fallibles* one *Infallible*; so that both together may not Err, but surely they who endeavour it, will meet with the same success as they, who out of two *Cyphers* would make a considerable Sum: For certainly, if every Member be Fallible, the whole Assembly is Fallible, if the Council may be deceiv'd in their *Mediums* and Arguments, (as they have often been) they may Err in their *Conclusions*, if they may be cozen'd in matters of *Fact*, they may Err in decreeing the *Popes Supremacy*, which is grounded on the *fact of Peter*; they may Err in *misapplying* Texts of Scripture, says Mr. Cressy, (a Papist) and is not that *misinterpreting* Scripture? Nay, They may Err in *Faith*, says Bellarmine, unless confirm'd by the Pope, If so, as has been observ'd, The *Infallibility* is in the Pope, and not in the Council, for if he be not *Infallible* in the confirmation, all may be *wrong*; and indeed Bellarmine owns, That it is the *Heresy of the Politicks*,

Politicks to say otherwise, and expressly declares, that if the whole Council be of one Opinion, and the Pope of another, he is to be believed before the whole Council: But all we can say will not convince Them; without particular Instances, where the Pope and a General Council have Err'd together; and to gratify their Curiosity, I will give Them an undeniable Catalogue of Instances, besides those above mention'd, of misapplying Scripture, and mistaking Facts.

§ 106. 1st. They have Err'd as often as they have decree'd against the express Words and meaning of Scripture: And thus, the Council of Trent Err'd grossly in excluding the vulgar Tongue from Divine Service contrary to, 1. Cor. 14. And the 2d Council of Nice Err'd in decreeing the worship of Images, contrary to the Second Commandment, Exodus 20. 4. and many other Places of Scripture.

Sess. 22.
Can. 9.

§ 107. 2dly, They Err when they change the express Institution of Jesus Christ; and yet this is done by Pope Martin the 5th and the General Council of Constance, which have sacrilegiously mutilated the Sacrament of the Eucharist, by denying the Cup to the Layty, altho' Christ had Instituted that Sacrament in both kinds; blasphemously Insinuating, as if They were wiser than He, and had found it necessary to prevent some Inconveni-

Inconveniences, which *He* had not foreseen, or not provided against.

(a) See
the first
Council of
Nice Canon
19 of Re-
baptizing
Hereticks.

§ 108. 3dly, They Err when they contradict the Tradition, and (a) Practice of the Church of Rome; but this the Council of Trent has done, in excluding Infants from the Eucharist, contrary to the practice of that Church for the first 600 Years.

§ 109. 4thly, They Err, when they contradict the Senses and Knowledge of all Men, and this the Council of Trent has done, in the Article of Transubstantiation, which every Body knows to be false, as certainly as he knows any thing in the World to be True.

Caranz. 608.
a. 3. de He-
reticis.

§ 120. 5ly, They Err when they Countenance and even command Perjury, Rebellion, and Murder, and yet this is done by Innocent III. and the General Council of Lateran, for, The Deposing and dispensing Doctrines are establish'd in the Third Canon of that Council, and have been practis'd accordingly, to the Ruin of many Princes and Kingdoms, and yet as Lessius observes, This Doctrine must be Right, else the Pope and the General Council have erred.

§ 121. 7ly, They err'd, when they did Authenticate the Vulgar Translation of the Bible, which all learned Men know to be very corrupt, and yet this was done in the Council of Trent.

§ 122. 7ly,

§ 122. 7ly, They Err with a witness, when they *contradict one another* substantially ; and thus the first *council of Nice*, Can. 6. which has limited the Jurisdiction of *Patriarchs*, is directly contradicted by the *Council of Trent*, which has decreed a *Papal Supremacy by Divine Right* over all.

§ 123. Thus the Numerous, Plenary, and General Council of *Ariminum*, (confirm'd by Pope *Liberius*,) err'd, in Establishing an heretical *Arian Creed*, contrary to that of the first *Council of Nice*.

§ 124. Thus the second *Council of Nice* Err'd, in their *Image Worship*, which is contradicted by the *General Councils of Constantinople and Frankfort*.

§ 125. Thus the 6th general Council, (confirm'd by the Pope) which decreed that *Marriage is dissolved by Heresy*, Err'd therein ; since the contrary is now determin'd by the *council of Trent*.

§ 126. Thus the *Councils of Constance and Basle* (approv'd by Popes) Err'd, in determining that Important point of *Faith*, That a *Council is above the Pope*, since the *Councils of Lateran and Trent* have with reproach decreed the contrary.

§ 127. And so I think we may conclude with *Albertus Pighius*, That *Councils* are of *Humane Invention*, and not of *Divine Institution* ; and with *St. Augustine*, that former

P

Councils

Synodum
Generalem
aliquoties
errasse per-
cipimus
Wald. l. 2.
Art. 2. c. 19.
§ 1.

Councils may be corrected by the later, and consequently, all may Err, and none of them (tho' approv'd by the Pope) are Infallible.

§ 128. And so I will finish this Point in the Words of the Great Canonist *Panormitan, cap. significasti de electione.* *In matters pertaining to Faith (says he) the Council is above the Pope; yet I suppose that if the Pope were induc'd with better Reasons and Authorities than the Council, that his Determination were rather to be embrac'd; for a Council also can Err, as it hath sometimes Err'd, for in matters relating to Faith, even the Opinion of one private Man were to be prefer'd to the determination of the Pope, if he were induc'd with better Reasons of the Old and New Testament than the Pope.* So that 'tis plain that he neither thought *Popes* or *Councils* *Infallible.*

Cusanus l. 2.
cap. 3, 4.

§ 129. Upon the whole matter, we may be assur'd from these *different* Opinions of the *Papists*, that the *Roman Church* do's not know where to fix the *Infallibility*; and since that *Church*, which pretends to it, can't tell where to find it, Will any other Persons pretend to discover it? since the *primitive Christians* could not find an *Infallible* Judge to decide their Controversies, and suppress their *Heresies*, Can any Body imagine, that there is such a *Tribunal* now? or that if *GOD* had appointed such a *Light*,
that

that it would be hid under a *Busbel*, and thereby rendred useleſs, or rather be put in a *Candleſtick*, ſuch as all the World might ſee, and be Illuminated thereby, and conſtantly directed in the ways of Truth?

§ 130. 'Tis certain, that if the *Roman Church* has this Privilege of *Infallibility*, ſhe has manifeſtly *betray'd her Truſt*, in not exerciſing it effectually; Why do's ſhe not determine this very Point, that even all *Papiſts* might agree, *where that Infallibility reſides*? Why do's ſhe not interpoſe between the Councils of *Conſtance* and *Lateran* in that Important point of Faith, *whether the Pope be above a Council*? Why do's ſhe not determine the great Articles of the *Immaculate Conception of the Bleſſed Virgin*, and the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*? Why do's ſhe not make *Infallible Comments upon Scripture*, but let even her own Doctors wrangle and Diſpute eternally? Is it *fear* to diſoblige, or *fear* to err, that hinders her? what ever it be, it is incoſiſtent with that *Divine Spirit of Infallibility* ſhe pretends to.

§ 131. Beſides, If *Infallibility* were neceſſary for the *Church*, it would be always neceſſary; if it were a *Property* of the *Church*, it wou'd be always *Inherent*: But it was above Three Hundred Years before there was a *General Council*; and during all that time, the *Church* was without this *Quality*;

nay, in the Nature of the Thing, There can be no *General Council* but when the *Respective Princes* will *Permit* : And if the *Emperor* had not turned *Christian*, there would probably have been no *General Council* to this day, there has been none for a Hundred and Fifty Years past, and in all likelihood there will be none to the end of the World. And is it not a *Precarious Infallibility*, which depends upon the *Politicks* of *Rome*, and the *Humours* or *Interests* of *Princes*?

§ 132. But that which is most wonderful is, that *They* who would Impose this *Infallibility* upon others, don't believe it *Themselves*, for the *Decrees* of *General Councils* are not immediately *Received* even in *Popish Countries*; no not the *Council of Trent* it self, tho' Confirm'd by the *Pope*, *France* will first very well consider it, which were a Jest, if they thought it *Divine* and *Infallible*; for the very *Deliberation* disowns it's *Authority*.

§ 133. But it will be needless to say any more on this Subject, but to refer the Reader to *Fryer Crab's* account of the *Second Council of Nice*, and *Father Paul's* or *Du Pin's* History of the *Council of Trent*, and he will be effectually cured, of the *Frenzy* of Imagining any *Infallibility*, in those *Assemblies*, or in the *Popes* who govern'd Them.

§ 134. And

§ 134. And thus having shewn the great *Improbability*, That *the Church should be Infallible* ; I come now to add, that it seems to me *absolutely Impossible*, unless every Member were Inspir'd.

§ 135. For *Infallibility* is an *Incommunicable Property of God* ; 'tis a glorious Ray of his *Essence*, no Creature is capable of it, or can have it's *Fallible Nature* chang'd to *Infallible* : The moment it were so, it would become *Divine*.

§ 136. 'Tis true, that the *Holy Ghost* did Inspire and Direct *Prophets* and *Apostles* to Preach his Doctrines, and Publish the Commands of *God to Men*, and what they declar'd in Obedience to such Inspiration, comes from *God*, and is *Infallibly true* : So that in some Sense, the *Prophets* and *Apostles* might be said to be *Infallible* ; but this did not change their *Nature*, or make them *Infallible* in other Matters, *Judas* tho' an *Apostle* betray'd his Master, and *Peter* himself deny'd his *Saviour* : So that no body must pretend to be *Infallible*, without the especial communication of the *Holy Ghost* to him, which we call *Inspiration*, nor farther than he is Inspired ; and it will be a *Sin against the Holy Ghost*, to pretend to the *Spirit* if he has it not, nor ought *he* to think *he* has, or any body else to believe that *he* has it, unless it be manifest in the *Gifts of Tongues*,

or of *Miracles*, as it was in the *Apostles*, and unless his doctrine be consonant to the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*.

§ 137. And it seems, as if the *Church of Rome* were sensible, that *extraordinary Inspiration* is necessary, and tho' they dare not *directly*, yet they do *obliquely* Insinuate, as if they pretended to extraordinary Assistance of the *Holy Ghost*, which cannot be excused from *Profaneness*, in such as know, that their *Ecclesiastical Polity* is manag'd by *Stratagem* and *Intrigue*, which occasioned that bitter *Sarcasme*, *That the Holy Ghost was sent from Rome to Trent in a Cloak-bag*.

§ 138. But whatever their pretence may be to *extraordinary Inspiration*, they well know, that they would be as vain as *Quakers*, if they should pretend to it, without the Gift of *Miracles*; for no body in his Senses, will receive *New Apostles* upon less evidence than the *Old* produc'd; and therefore their *Legends* are stuffed with *Miracles* and *Wonders* Innumerable, but so silly, so improbable, and so ill Attested, that they make sport for their Adversaries, and are a *Jest* to the Unbigotted of their own Communion.

§ 139. And indeed it seems no less Arrogant than Dangerous, for any Church or Person to pretend to *new Revelations*, for it is Preaching a *new Gospel*, and Rending the
the

the Scripture needless, and the old Revelation useless; If it be the *old Gospel* they would Preach, their own St. *Antoninus* Archbishop of *Florence* has told them, *That new Inspiration is needless, and that the Scriptures are sufficient, and that God hath spoken so fully in the Scriptures, that he need not any other way reveal any thing to Us, for all things necessary may be had there;* So that we may conclude, That since *New Gospels* are prohibited, *New Inspirations* are unnecessary, and exceeding dangerous, for they might Repeal and Change as well as Add, and are by no means to be received upon *less Evidence* than the former, nor to be at all Regarded, if they contradict the *Gospel*, or that glorious Scheme of Piety we are in possession of already.

§ 140. But supposing that *some* were *Inspir'd*, and could work *Miracles*, yet that would not do, for it would still be impossible that the *Catholick Church* should be *Infallible*, unless every individual Christian in all Ages were *Inspir'd*, for *Bonum ex Integra causa, malum ex quolibet defectu*: And if only *some* had the Revelation, then only *Those* and not the *whole Catholick Church* would be *Infallible*; and that will not serve, for the Promise is not made to any *part* of the *Church*, nor is there any description in Scripture, *which part of the Church is Infallible*; so

that 'tis plain beyond reply, That *the whole Church* cannot be *Infallible* unless every Member of it be so; and sure no Body will think that every Member of it is *Infallible*, when so many Churches have apostatiz'd, and more vile Sinners and gross Hereticks still continue in the outward Communion of the *Catholick Church*, and some of the worst of them have been Popes, and pretended Heads of that great Body.

§ 141. But to put this point beyond reply, The very *Elect* are not *Infallible*, but as has been said, may Err, and some of them Err'd fundamentally, (tho' not finally) and even deny'd Christ, as St. Peter did, but in points not fundamental, or destructive of the *Christian Faith*, the very *Elect* may dye in their Errors; as some of the Fathers, and many of the Saints in the Roman Martyrology have done.

Bell. 153.

§ 142. Nor was the *Universal Church*, even in the *Apostles Days*, *Infallible*, for gross Errors and abominable Heresies of Gnosticks, Nicolaitans, and the like, started up every Day, and some were for Paul, some for Apollo, and some for Cephas; so that there were Criminal Schisms in the *Primitive Times*: And if the *Universal Church* was not *Infallible* in the *Apostles Days*, it would be prodigious confidence, to say that it is *Infallible* now, The truth is, that neither then nor

now

now was it possible, that the whole Church should be *Infallible*, unless every Member of it were Inspir'd by the *Holy Ghost*.

§ 143. Upon the whole matter I conclude, That the Church is not the Rule of Faith, 1st. Because it is not Inspir'd in an extraordinary manner, so as to render it *Infallible*, and nothing can be the Rule of Faith but the *infallible Revelation* of the *Holy Ghost*. 2^{dly}. Because the Authority of the Church, whatsoever it be, is founded on *Scripture*, and therefore not the Church, but the *Scripture* is the Rule of Faith. 3^{dly}. Because no Church can be of Authority to distinguish it self from other Churches; and if it cannot guide us in that important Question which is the true Church, it cannot be a compleat Rule of Faith; but the same Guide that directs us in that Question, will likewise serve for the rest. 4^{thly}. Because the *Catholick Church*, as 'tis a diffusive Body, cannot meet to guide or direct, and no Representation of it is Authentick, or promis'd to be *Infallible*; nor indeed has there been any Council or Convocation since the *Apostles* Days, that with any colour of Reason or Truth, could be esteemed a full and just Representative of the *Catholick Church*. 5^{thly}. Because no particular Church can be the Rule of Faith, since they are all Fallible,
and

and there is not so much as a promise of *Indefectibility* made to any of Them, And forasmuch as *Rome*, and all the Churches in Communion with her, as *France*, *Spain*, &c. Are but *Particular Churches*, as the *Greek Churches of Muscovy, Slavonia, Asia*, &c. Likewise are, they may All Apostatize, as the Seven Churches of *Asia* did; and if they actually don't, yet are they no *Rule of Faith* to others, since they themselves *may fail*, and if any one of them pretends to an exemption, it can signify nothing, since God *Almighty* has not been pleas'd to Reveal to Us, *which that one Church is*. And if it be Reply'd, That the *True Church* is Manifest enough, for, where-ever we find *Antiquity, Unity, and Universality*, which are the Marks of the *True Church*, it is certainly *there*; That canting popular Argument would be exploded, as soon as it were consider'd, 1st, That we have no *Divine Rule* for those *Marks*, neither are they *proper*, or *true*. 2dly, That every Man must be Judge for himself, whether the *Church* and the *Marks* agree. And, 3dly, That the *Heathen Religion* has (at least in the Primitive Times it had) more of those marks than the *Christian*.

§ 144. Wherefore, Since [the *Authority* or *Testimony* of the *Roman Church*, or of any other *Particular Church*, can be of
no

no weight or effect in her own case, we must have recourse at last to the *Holy Scriptures*, as well for the *Authority* and Power of *Particular Churches*, and of the *Church Universal*, as also for the *Rule of our Faith*, according to those memorable Sayings of *St. Augustine* : *Neither ought I* (says he) *at this time to alledge the Council of Nice, nor you that of Ariminum, for neither am I bound to the Authority of the one, nor you to that of the other, let us both dispute with the Authorities of Scripture, which are comon to Us both* : And elsewhere he says, that there are certainly *God's Books*, to whose *Authority* we both consent, *There let us look for the Church, there let us examine our Cause*. And in respect to his Advice, I will follow so good an Example, and seek for a *Rule* for my Faith in the *Holy Scripture*.

Aug. contra .
Max.

De Unitate
Ecclesie. l. 10 .
c. 3.

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